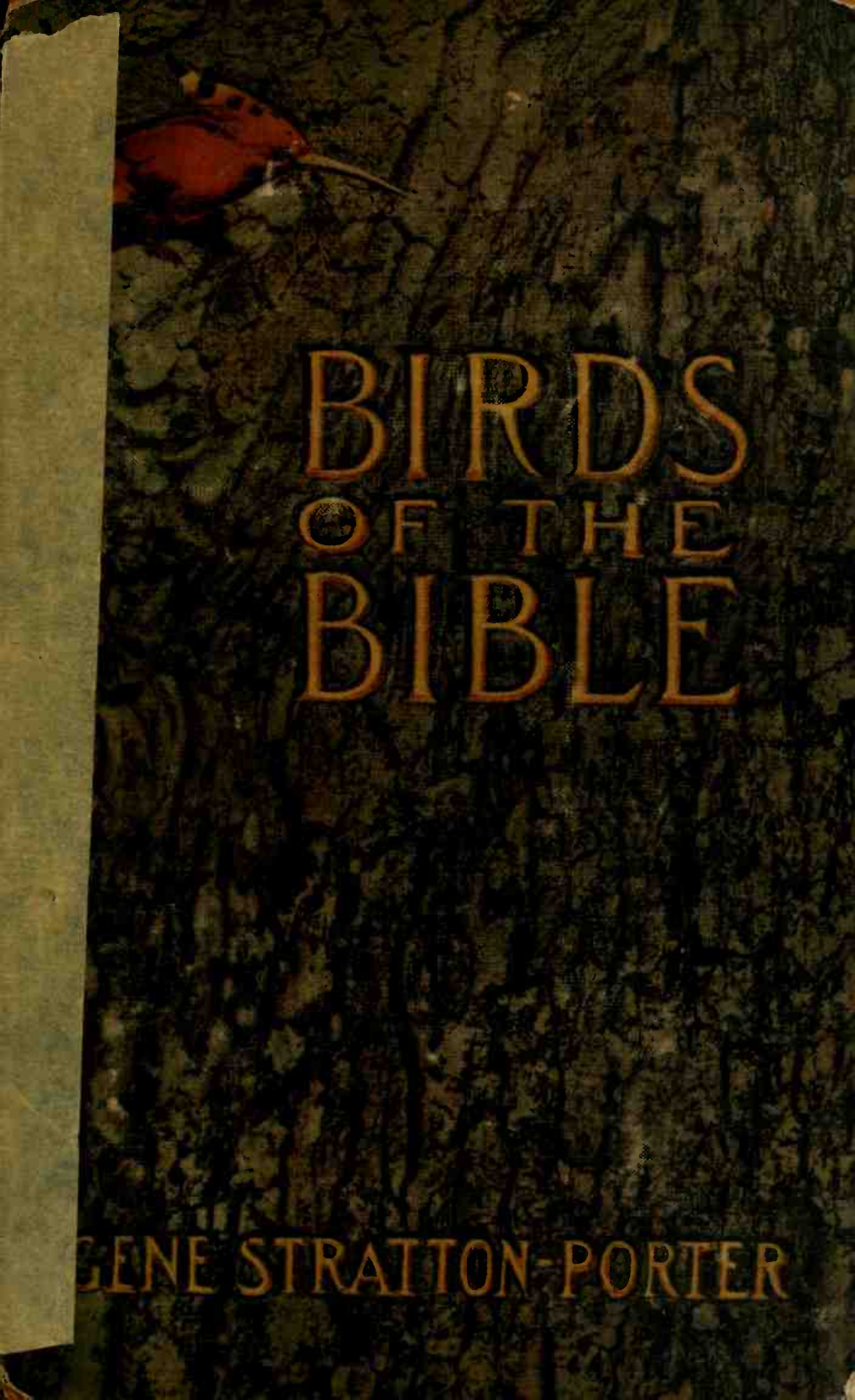
BIRDS
OF THE
BIBLE
GENE STRATTON-PORTER

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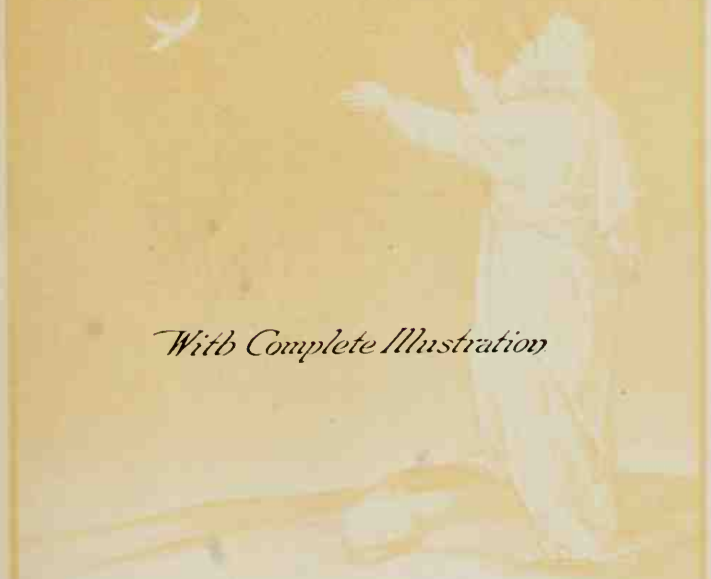
HAWK STRATTON-PORTER

"Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?"

BIRDS OF THE BIBLE

by

Gene Stratton-Porter



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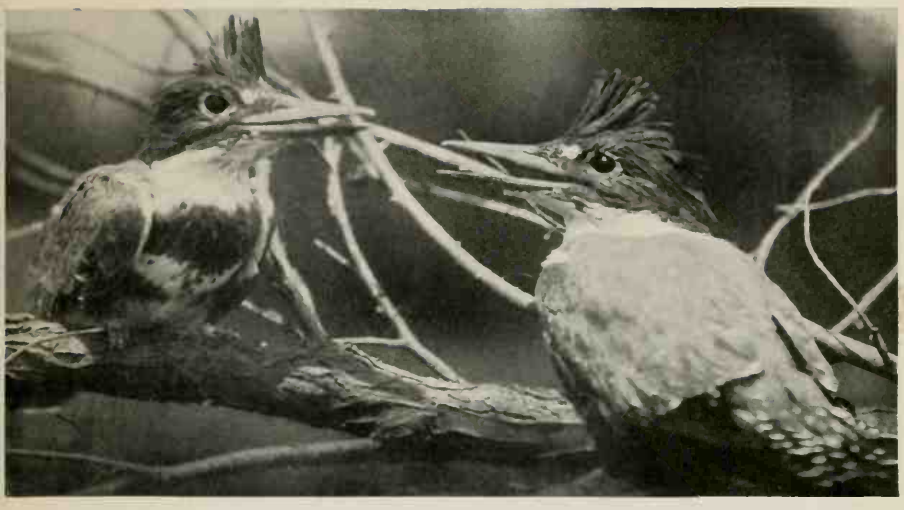

TO MY MOTHER, MARY STRATTON

Books by

GENE STRATTON-PORTER

THE SONG OF THE CARDINAL
FRECKLES
WHAT I HAVE DONE WITH BIRDS
AT THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW
A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST
BIRDS OF THE BIBLE

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THE TIME

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."—PETER.

ARCHÆOPTERYX CARR

"Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

Chapter I

THE TIME

In order to appreciate clearly what Moses recorded in history, what Solomon said in his wisdom, what David sang in ecstasy, and what Job cried out in his agony, concerning the birds, it is necessary first to become familiar with the time in the world's history in which these men lived, and the country which was their home. The books of Moses come first, and they contain references to more birds than the writings of any of the other compilers of the Bible.

Although a Hebrew, Moses was reared and educated in the court of an Egyptian king, and so had access to all the culture that could be afforded by Egypt, then in almost as advanced a state of civilization as it is to-day. At manhood Moses understood the best methods of agriculture, was skilled in stone-cutting, and almost every manual occupation of his time. He was a remarkable diplomat, a great teacher, a born leader of men, and a soldier.

From his elevation he saw with clearness of vision how bitter was the bondage in which his people, the Hebrews, were held by the Egyptians. In describing it he wrote, "And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service wherein they made them serve with

rigor." No wonder the Hebrews since have not cared for manual labor!

So in his intimate position at court, Moses began to intercede with the king to be allowed to lead away the Israelites to new, unclaimed territory and found a nation. But slaves are not easily given up, as witness our own Civil War. At last, after Egypt had known more suffering than she ever inflicted upon the Hebrews, Moses was allowed to start with the Children of Israel on the long, indirect route to the Promised Land. After forty years of wandering the spot was located, and the Hebrews began making homes for their families and regulations for their government.

In considering what Moses had to say of the birds, and those he mentioned in the course of compiling laws, two things must be taken into consideration. First, the people of whom he was the mental and moral guide long had been slaves, at hard manual labor. They neither had time nor liberty for study and personal improvement. They were like children, wondering, questioning, doubting, but very ignorant. Any law Moses laid down for them to follow, or any history he wrote for their education, had of necessity to be plain, simple, and minute as to detail; not what he, reared with all the opportunities of the king's court, knew of science or past ages, but what they could comprehend.

Taking this foundation fact into consideration, I do not see how the greatest scientist to-day, if he were placed in precisely the same circumstances, could write a clearer, truer, history of creation for a people of mental condition similar to the Hebrews at that time, than the accounts of the beginning of the earth as recorded by Moses.

Moses lived fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, and so, as the great law-giver reckoned time, he placed the beginning of the world about three thousand years before his age. At the rate of development from his day to ours we know that this estimate was altogether inadequate. Hundreds of thousands of years had elapsed since the earth emerged from chaos; no man could estimate how many; no man can comprehend in these days, much less could he have done so in the time of Moses. But he wanted some sort of basis on which to found his history, and so he said three thousand years. He proved that he himself comprehended that no man could gauge time accurately when he said, in addressing the Almighty, "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

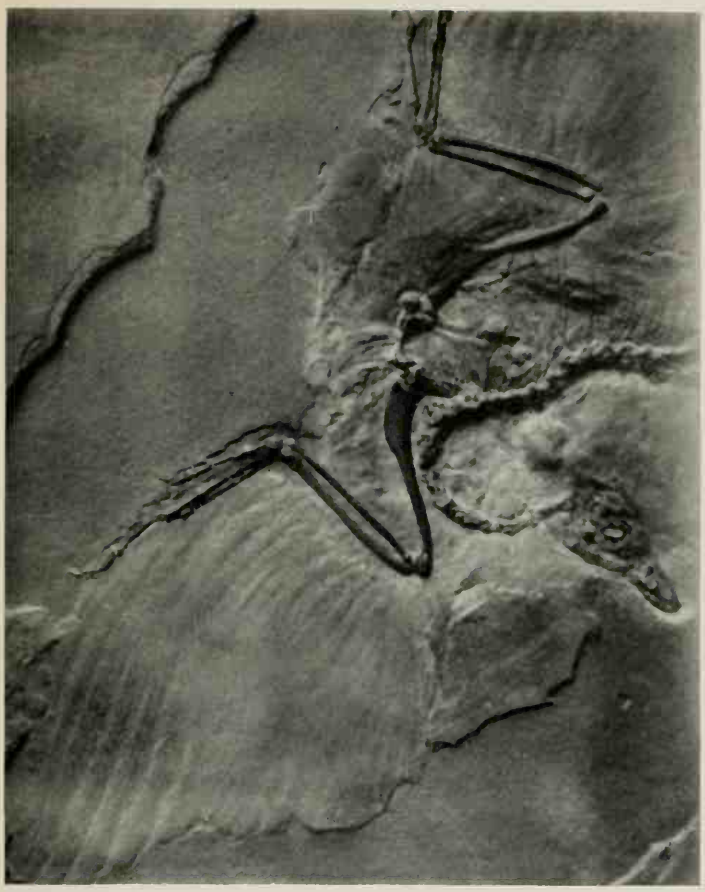
After the birth of Christ, Peter referred to this in a way which showed that the thought of Moses was very clear to him, and he sought to emphasize it to men of his day, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Since no one has been able to number our days accurately, and it takes a thousand of our years to make a day with the Almighty, this allows all the time necessary for the evolution of the earth and the development of plant and animal life. But according to this rate of reckoning time our world is not yet a week old with the Almighty.

Moses said, "God created the heaven and the earth." In these days every one concedes that creation required more time than Moses thought necessary to try to explain to the Children of Israel. Science has many theories

concerning creation. Once it was believed that the earth was flat and stationary, and if you went far enough you would fall over the edge. Then it was discovered that the world was round, and revolved and rotated. So scientists were sure that it and all other heavenly bodies were great pieces cast from the sun. Then the theory was formulated that the sun threw off large rings of incandescent gases, which cooled and formed planets. In other words, Jupiter, Mars, Uranus, Saturn, our world, and the great bodies were once "hollow globes abandoned by the sun."

As I write, a new theory has been launched, attended by the usual amount of corroborative figures. This idea is that the sun is not the parent of any planet, but that all heavenly bodies are formed by the meeting of two or more streams of cosmical dust, the meeting of which produces a whirling motion around a center. These coiling streams are the beginnings of planets, which keep on whirling and gathering more dust, and at the same time grow compact by contact with the resisting forces against which they revolve. All this is demonstrated in terms understandable only to those who have given the subject a lifetime of study, and figured to the last contingency on reams of paper.

Without doubt there is a man yet to be born who will develop a theory even more plausible than any of these, and demonstrate it to the least mathematical proposition. But the more one studies the greater becomes the doubt that any man ever will see light who can convince the people of his time that he has discovered the origin of matter, the process of world formation, and the beginning of life. This is the most fascinating study pre-



ARCHÆOPTERYX CARR

Detail of skull, neck, and wing claw

sented to scientists, but in the end all of them reach a dead stop when they face the origin of matter. No scientist ever has explained it, and so it becomes a great relief to fall back upon Divinity and settle the question casually as did Moses when he said, "God created."

Moses taught that in the beginning the earth was without form and in darkness. All scientists agree with this, and give the reasons, which they have no right to assume, Moses did not know quite as well as they, because he confined his statements to brief outlines, and simplified his outlines to the comprehension of his people. He knew so much else with which scientists agree, no doubt he understood that also. Science teaches that on account of the intense heat which existed in the earth in its first form, and the extreme cold (estimated at Neptune to be near three hundred and sixty-four degrees below Fahrenheit zero) into which the heated mass was plunged, great clouds of steam were lifted, and formed a surrounding body of water, that shut out light and the world was in darkness.

Moses stated that the Almighty ordered that there should be light. Scientists write volumes explaining how, when the mass of water became too heavy, it fell back upon the earth, submerging it in a sea which reached almost, if not quite, the boiling point. As the land masses cooled they shrank greatly, and the depressions formed the beds of seas, while the highest points lifted above the water. When the crust and seas cooled, through untold periods of time, the vapor was not thrown up, and light could penetrate to the earth.

There is a possibility that Moses recognized that this was what had happened, and upon it he based the story

of Noah and the ark. Or traditions of such a period in the earth's history may have been handed down by students before his time, or there could have been a great flood as described, that covered all the then known surface of the earth.

Moses said the Almighty commanded the earth to produce after its kind, and the waters to bring forth abundance of life. Science used to teach that carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulphur were all that were required to produce spontaneous life, and that all these elements existed in varying quantities almost everywhere and under various temperature and pressure, thus accounting for differing forms of life.

Now there is a new theory of the origin of life, called "Panspermy." This claims that spontaneous generation is impossible. It asserts as "an immutable law that lifeless matter can not be transformed into living matter without the aid of living substance." So the theory is launched that life is passed from planet to planet by the transference of living germs. Like all such propositions, this one is figured with the most minute mathematical precision. It provides that these life germs shall be so small as to be invisible, of so little weight that they can be pushed across the great airless spaces existing between planets with rays of light, and so hardy that they will survive for centuries in cold as great as that of liquid hydrogen.

One point upon which Moses and all the scientists agree is that animal life originated in the water, and developed there for untold time before it appeared upon the land; and with different environment took on different forms. While these forms were developing in the

ARCHÆOPTERYX CARR

Detail of foot and tail

water, in the warm, steaming, half-light on land great beds of mosses, marsh plants, and gigantic ferns fifty feet in height and with wide-spreading branches were growing. As the light grew stronger these fibrous growths fell before it, and succeeding ages covered them with upheavals from the waters, washing from the mountains, and the eternal sifting that we poetically call "star dust." At first thought this would seem to form no considerable portion of the earth's surface, but when we remember that from the deck of a vessel sailing the ocean for a thousand miles an average of sixty-three barrels of dust can be swept, we realize that, although imperceptible to us, star dust is a factor in surface formation. Now we are digging these buried growths from where we consider "the bowels of the earth," in a hardened state we call coal, and burning it for fuel, but the leaves and mosses that come to light imprinted or petrified upon it prove that once they were upon the surface.

This to me is the flaw in Panspermy. These first vegetable growths flourished in semi-darkness, while for ages previous animal life was developing in the darkened waters. The earth never had seen a ray of sunlight or moonlight. Thick vapor clouds were all around it. In order that Panspermy may prove true, it must be shown that it was possible for germs borne on rays of light to penetrate this fog and sow the land and water with life. The only explanation for this would seem to be that these germs were caught in the vapor clouds and fell upon the earth in the form of rain.

Now, as we dig up layers of coal, and the slate and rock which go to make the different formations of the earth's crust, we find the petrified remains of these

first animals that crept from the waters and the beasts and birds that evolved from them. In the American Museum of Natural History can be seen the "Brontosaurus," a little over fifteen feet tall, and almost sixty-seven feet long; the length of the leg bones, in comparison with the spine, proving that the head, neck, and tail were serpentine. In the British Museum there is part of the skeleton of the "Archæopteryx," and in Berlin a complete skeleton. The bird had a tail with twenty long, slender vertebræ, a skull with thirteen teeth above and three below, each set in a separate socket, feet like our birds of to-day, and wings, the third joint of which ended in three-fingered claws much longer than the feet, the feathers clearly outlined, and the specimen near the size of a crow. Our birds have shed their teeth and gradually dropped and contracted their tails, until a queer little muscular appendage, having only a few very small vertebræ, fattish substance to hold the feathers and cover the oil sac, forms the tail. The two muscle and skin covered bones, that we call the third joint, have evolved from the long claws of the wing tip.

Every ancient writer who touched upon natural history proved that he knew of the existence of these toothed and tailed birds and winged serpents. As these creatures existed in the Jurassic Period, lost their tails by the middle Cretaceous, and shed the last tooth by the beginning of the Tertiary, long ages before the appearance of man, it is only reasonable to suppose that our ancestors knew of toothed birds just as we do, by finding petrified skeletons. The fact remains that the ancients knew, for they introduced these species into tradition and my-

thology, and even incorporated them in straight attempts at the natural history of their own day.

Pliny described an eagle, of which he wrote: "Lady Phœmonæ, who was supposed and said to be the daughter of Apollo, hath reported that this eagle is toothed: . . . with her accordeth Boethus likewise." He also wrote in describing the birds of Diomedes: "Toothed they are, and they have eyes as bright and red as fire; otherwise their feathers be all white. They are like unto the white sea mews with a black cop."

In support of the theory of the serpentine origin of birds, Aristotle said, "For they say there are winged serpents in Ethiopia." That "they say" undoubtedly referred to the statement of Herodotus, who described a serpent similar to our water snake: "Its wings not feathered, but like those of bats."

Every geological formation which is investigated helps to prove these statements concerning the beginning of serpent, bird, beast, and vegetable life. They combine with other facts of nature to prove that the water did "bring forth abundantly" and that the earth yielded "after its kind." If you want to believe the theory of spontaneous life, that is all right. If you prefer the idea of life transference from planet to planet, that is your privilege. If either is the origin of life, God is responsible for it, and He likes to have men develop their brain by studying His creations. The point is that I can conceive no plainer and truer method than that of Moses, in which to picture to an enslaved and superstitious people the story of the beginning of the world.

Again, Moses and his contemporaries in the compila-

tion of the Bible wrote from their personal knowledge and the traditions of their ancestors. They had no authorities to whom to refer, at least they do not mention any, as do the writers of their time in Greece and Italy. Aristotle lived over a thousand years after the time of Moses, and wrote the first preserved records of bird life. He mentioned predecessors, who may have been contemporaneous with Moses; but their work was lost, and as it was done in another country and another language, there was not even a slight chance that Bible writers had any benefit from it. So that the birds mentioned in the Bible, and the history of their habits and characteristics, which is mostly used as the basis of comparisons of bird life with man, form our very earliest records.

Moses first wrote of the birds when he specified those which were not to be used for food, while compiling the laws to govern the Hebrews after they had reached the Promised Land. As a rule, it is easy to see why he so emphatically declared certain birds an "abomination." There was a good natural history reason, especially as the list stands in the latest and most scholarly translations. Other Bible writers accepted these laws of Moses, and what they had to say of birds was more in the way of comparing the processes of bird life with man. Solomon recorded that he "spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes."

Job, in replying to friends who brought him such dubious comfort at the time of his afflictions, continued that poetical strain in which his whole book is couched

STORK ANSCHUTZ

"The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times."

when he turned to nature for a comparison. He proved that he had learned great lessons all around him, and was capable of speaking of what he learned comprehensively.

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;
Or, speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind."

It was Job who indicated that, although chickens were unknown in his time, people were eating the eggs of fowls of some species when he asked:

"Can that which hath no savor be eaten without salt?
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?"

King David, who said of himself, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," unhesitatingly declared:

"I know all the fowls of the mountains:
And the wild beasts of the field are mine."

It was David who, in writing of the goodness of the Almighty to the Israelites, recorded that

"He rained flesh upon them also as dust,
And feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea."

Birds were so plentiful that the Creator enumerated "the fowls of the air" as one of the methods of destruction which should fall upon the Jews; and the son of Sirach wrote in Ecclesiasticus, "As birds flying down he sprinkleth the snow."

People were accustomed to seeing large flocks in migration. The birds of interior Africa came up to Bible lands, and those found there crossed the Mediterranean, each returning when driven by changes of season. Jeremiah proved that people of his time knew the birds, and spoke of them casually, just as we do, by recording that "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming."

It must have been the remembrance of myriads of birds, massed in migration, which was in the mind of Isaiah when he wrote that beautiful and poetic line, "As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem." He had seen clouds of birds sweeping the night sky to seek the land in which they homed, and he thought that, like them, the Almighty would fly to the defense of the loved city.

But when the people had sinned, and the Creator was provoked to anger, He warned them that He would destroy Judah and Jerusalem, and give the carcasses of the inhabitants to "the fowls of the heaven." In prophesying the doom of Ethiopia, He called upon the birds to take part in its destruction. "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling place; like clear heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becometh a ripening grape, He shall cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and the spreading branches shall He take away and cut down. They shall be left together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains: and the beasts of the earth: and the ravenous birds shall summer upon them, and the beasts of the earth shall

GULLS

JOB

"As birds flying down he sprinkleth the snow."

winter upon them." Hosea said, "As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird." And because he was painting a picture of the distress which should fall upon the Israelites for their many sins, one naturally thinks of a bird of swift flight, as the swallow.

The origin of the oft-quoted phrase, "A little bird told me," can be found in Ecclesiastes:

> "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought;
> And curse not the rich in thy bedchamber:
> For a bird of the air shall carry thy voice,
> And that which hath wings shall tell the matter."

Jeremiah complained, "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds around about are against her."

Jesus, in illustration of His devotion to His ministry, was thinking of the birds when He said:

> "The foxes have holes
> The birds of the air have nests;
> But the Son of man hath not where
> to lay His head."

Balaam remembered the secure bird homes he had seen among the shelving rocks and on the high mountains when he said to the Kenites:

> "Strong is thy dwelling place,
> And thou puttest thy nest in a rock."

Job had the picture of the happy home-life of a pair of brooding birds in mind when, in recounting the days of his prosperity, he cried:

> "Then I said I shall die in my nest,
> And I shall multiply my days as the sand."

A proverb in Ecclesiastes contains these lines:

> "Birds will resort unto their like;
> And truth will return unto them that practice her."

Habakkuk, in reproving the Chaldeans for covetousness, drew on his knowledge of the habits of the birds when he gave the warning, "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high."

Throughout the Bible there is constant mention of the practices of snaring and netting birds; some for food, some for sacrifice, and some, undoubtedly, for caged pets, since James wrote that "every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind." Jeremiah compared the civil state of Judah to "a cage full of birds." And he exhibited a sense of humor when he did it, for, no doubt, Judah did resemble the cage of a dealer in birds, packed with many species, rebellious in confinement, and quarreling over perching-places or food.

The Bible makes it quite evident that even in those early days people so loved the graceful motion and cheery songs of the birds that they constructed rude cages of peeled willow wands and confined beautiful feathered creatures for pets. Job inquired:

> "Wilt thou play with him as a bird?
> Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?"

Jeremiah said, "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit." Jesus referred to the sale of sparrows, which seemed to have been a common and constant practice; and it was He who entered the temple and "overthrew the seats of them that sold doves."

SPARROW NEST STRATTON-PORTER

"The birds of the air have nests."

Birds were so numerous in those lands in which Bible scenes were enacted that undoubtedly they were much tamer than those we know, which for generations have been pursued with the smoke and explosion of guns. In ancient times they were caught by some sort of lure, or a trap, which did not frighten those escaping and make them so wild. Those methods really seem more humane. Sometimes a struggling bird could break a snare or a net; a gun is usually fatal. I think the very frequent mention of this custom of taking birds in the Bible is due to the fact that there is such a wonderful parallel to be drawn between a man setting a snare for an unsuspecting bird, to capture it, and offering innocent-appearing lures to entangle people unawares. Over and over, almost every Bible writer made these comparisons.

Isaiah said, "Fear and the pit and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth!" David promised, "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." Solomon, writing of the lure of the Strange Woman, recorded that a man went to her,

> "As a bird hasteth to the snare,
> And knoweth not it is for his life."

David gave the warning, "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares." But he also made the promise, "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." In writing a sonnet on the perils of giving surety for the debts of another, Solomon twice made use of this illustration:

> "My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbor,
> If thou hast stricken thy hands for a stranger,
> Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,
> Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth,

Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbor;
Go, humble thyself, and importune thy neighbor.
Give not sleep to thine eyes,
Nor slumber to thine eyelids,
Deliver thyself,
As a roe from the hand of the hunter,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler."

Equally common was the practice of netting not only birds, but animals of great size and strength. That these nets had to be concealed with great care we gather from the wise man who said in Proverbs, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird!" Using this as an illustration which all of his hearers could comprehend, Hosea, in reproving the wicked, said, "Where they go I will spread my net upon them, I will bring them down as the fowls of heaven." In illustration of the loss of courage of the people, Isaiah said to them:

"Thy sons have fainted,
They lie at the top of all the streets,
As an antelope in a net."

Most of the methods for taking birds and animals at that time were included in the words of Bildad, when he reproved poor, suffering Job on the ash heap for trying to explain and excuse his condition.

"How long will ye lay snares for words?"

"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his fire shall not shine.
The light shall be dark in his tent,
And his lamp above him shall be put out,
The steps of his strength shall be straightened,

BROODING JAY STRATTON-PORTER

"Then I said I shall die in my nest."

And his own counsel shall cast him down,
For he is cast into a *net* by his own feet
And he walketh upon the *toils*,
A *gin* shall take him by the heels,
And a *snare* shall lay hold on him.
A *noose* is hid for him in the ground,
And a *trap* for him in the way."

All these methods for capturing birds are easy enough to understand, and to these were added several others of such cruel design that they resulted in wholesale slaughter. There was the decoy method, by which young larks, doves, or quails were taken from the nest, raised by hand, and made very tame. These were then hidden in cages of wands, and when their notes had attracted large numbers of their kind, they were skillfully dropped by arrows of concealed bowmen. Still worse was the custom of taking a wild pigeon or quail, sewing its eyelids together, and binding it in a good location for birds, so that its fluttering and cries would lure large numbers to their death through curiosity.

The birds of the Bible are constantly written of as fowl. This is our translation of a Hebrew root which means "to attack vehemently." In its original use it undoubtedly referred to birds of prey, and not to songsters and game birds. It is very probable that the term began to be applied to birds which were used for food when they first confined them in coops and cages to fatten them, near 600 B. C. Aristotle wrote of "domestic fowls," in contrast with wild birds, so that the distinction was made in his time. But it must be borne in mind that these compilers of the Bible meant *any* bird, and all birds, when they said "fowl." However, what they wrote, and

the connection in which they recorded it, made their meaning so clear, their knowledge of bird life so positive, their conception of bird habits and characteristics so poetical, that with the added knowledge of the centuries lying between their time and ours, no man has surpassed them in drawing wonderful comparisons between the life of birds and human beings.

Of writers of Greece and Italy most nearly contemporaneous with Bible historians, the oldest was Aristophanes, the Grecian satirist, who lived 444 B. C. and wrote the immortal comedy, "The Birds." But as he was simply parodying the extravagance and foolishness of the people, by making the birds found a city, and do the vain and silly things he wished to ridicule humanity for doing, his work has no scientific value. It merely proves that half our birds of to-day are known by the same name they were then, and have the same habits and characteristics.

The father of the history of birds was Aristotle, who lived 400 B. C., and in all probability he knew Aristophanes. He wrote in the days of Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi. The bulk of his work is highly regarded by scientists, and much, in fact nearly two-thirds of what he recorded, proves good natural history to-day. The remaining third is a queer and quaint commingling of tradition, sayings of augurs and oracles, and sheer imagination. His ideas of the origin of some species were marvelous, but all that he said of bird life was extremely interesting.

He had a very correct idea of the circulation of the blood of man, and his physiology. He sustained his points by extracts from Synnesis, a physician of Cypress, who came near owing the perpetuity of his name to these

TAMED FALCON STRATTON-PORTER

"For every kind of beast and of bird is tamed."

quotations; for the remainder of his work was lost. Aristotle also quoted Diogenes of Crete, with whose sayings we are familiar; and Polybus, of the island of Cos, whose work survives him.

What Aristotle had to say of animals is less reliable than his history of man, which is easily explained by the fact that, as a matter of self-preservation, men naturally would investigate themselves first, and find the material for such study most convenient to obtain. Much of his animal history is correct, but the per cent which fails to prove true is filled with ideas that seem to us so crude as to be wonderful.

My reason for wishing to introduce a few of these superstitions and traditions is to set in sharp contrast the natural history of the Bible and that of pagan writers of Greece and Rome, of the same days, and even centuries later. There is scarcely a bird or a beast mentioned in the Bible, either in description or comparison, that is not so sanely and accurately used that reference might not quite as well apply to our corresponding species of to-day.

But Aristotle wrote that there were "two kinds of lions. One of these has a round body and more curly hair, and is a more cowardly animal. The other is of longer form, has straight hair, and is more courageous." Undoubtedly this described a male and female of the same species. He gravely recorded that "horses delight in meadows and marshes, and drink dirty water: and if it is clean, they first disturb it with their hoofs, and then drink it." Any one who has watered a horse at a stream or river and has seen the animal wade deeper and deeper, thrusting its muzzle further and further out to avoid the disturbance caused by its feet, knows what to think of this.

He related that sheep produce males or females from "the nature of the water which they drink," and also that "in Antandria there are two rivers, one of which turns the sheep white, the other black; and the Scamander appears to make the sheep yellow, wherefore some people think that Homer called the Scamander the Xanthus." He wrote that "the weasel eats the herb rue before it attacks a serpent, for the smell of this herb is obnoxious to serpents."

His explanation of the rapid increase of mice was that "in a certain part of Persia the female fœtus of the mice are found to be pregnant in the uterus of the parent."

His accounts of caterpillars, butterflies, and fish are accurate in parts, because observation of these subjects is easier, yet what he wrote contains many amazing statements. For example, he said that "butterflies are produced from caterpillars: and these originate in the leaves of green plants." "The commencement of life in all other worms, and in all creatures produced from worms, originates in the influence of the sun and wind." "There are several kinds of bees: the best are round, small, and variegated." "They bring the material for wax from the droppings of trees, but the honey falls from the air, principally about the rising of the stars, and when a rainbow rests upon the earth." "We argue that wax is made from flowers, but that the bees do not make the honey, but simply collect that which falls." Most quaint of all: "It is good for bees to have drones among them, for it makes them more industrious." "When the wind is high they carry a stone with them for balance."

There are many quotable things concerning fish, and the birth of eels is interesting, for he said that they "orig-

HAWK STRATTON-PORTER

"The hawk does not eat the heart of any bird which it has killed."

inate in what are called the bowels of the earth, which are found spontaneously in mud and moist earth."

Because migration limited the residence of most birds to a half year in one place, and the free, wild life they lived, they came in for the greatest share of superstition, mystery, and fabrication. In fact, the portion devoted to birds is so remarkable in its surprises that it is a never-ending source of delight to the bird-lover.

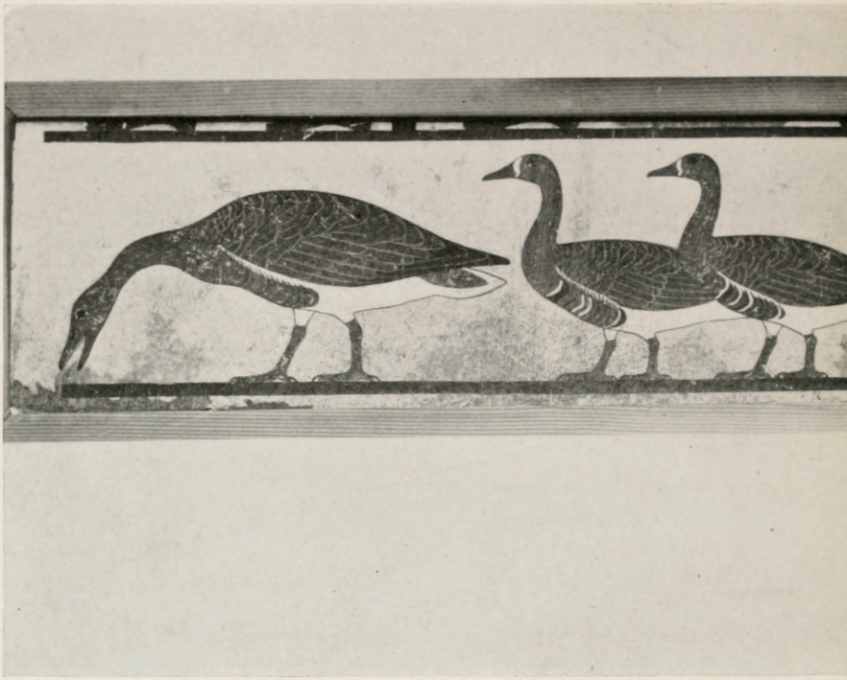
He naively wrote that certain birds were "of good color and habit," without in the least indicating what the color and habit was; and again he said that others were "bad." He described one bird as "faulty, both in its color and in its voice." His store of unexpected adjectives in bird-lore is a delight, as witness these detached phrases: "The chlorion is a clever and diligent bird." "The elea has an excellent mode of life." He said of another: "Its colors are beautiful, its mode of life good, and its form elegant;" and again, "It is swift, elegant, liberal, fearless, warlike, and a good omen;" or, "It is ingenious in providing its substance, though otherwise an unfortunate bird." In what manner ingenious, or how unfortunate, we are left to surmise.

He wrote that some people regard the cuckoo as a "changed hawk," and quoted the poet Masseus, "that the bird which lays three eggs hatches but two of them, and brings up but one." He attributed the red rim around the eyes of certain birds to the violence of their emotion at mating time, and declared that the "hawk does not devour the heart of the bird it has killed." He described a bird "as large as a bustard which hides its eggs in the skin of a hare or fox," and said that the bill of an eagle continued to curve as it grew older until the bird died of

starvation. He confirmed the story that swans sang; and accounted for the number of partridges by explaining that they build two nests, on one of which the male broods, and the female on the other; and that the male mated with all the young females before they left the nest. If any Bible writer ever produced any natural history similar to this, which is just a few quotations cited at random, I have failed to find it.

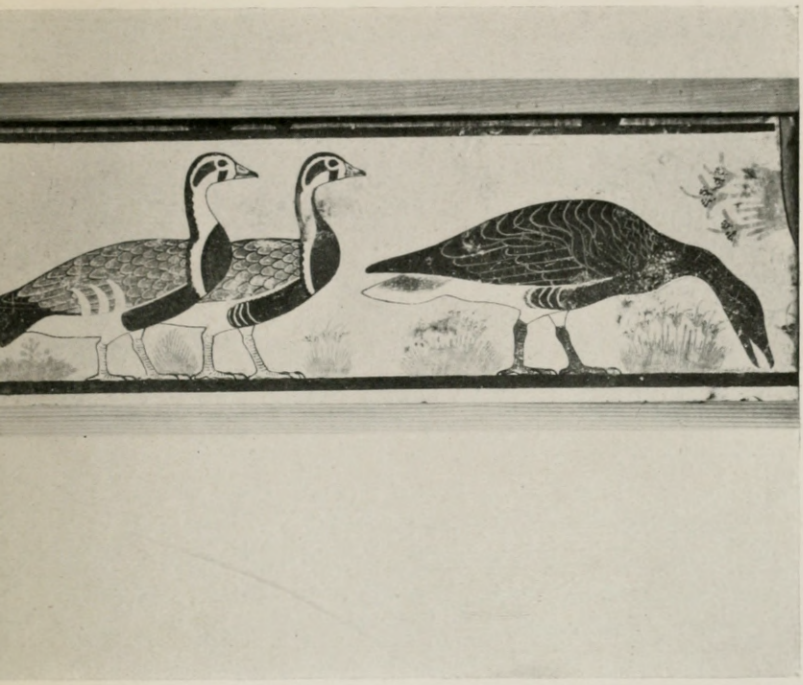
Pliny was the next nature writer whose work is preserved. I doubt if any man who ever lived can present such a record as a student. While he bathed, a secretary read to him or took dictation from him. While he ate, the reading continued, while he walked for exercise and when he traveled, so that he collected a vast amount of information. His history of the world was finished when he was nearly sixty years of age. It is a volume the size of the average unabridged dictionary, and really seems to cover the known world and to discourse on every topic under the sun. We are concerned with volume ten, which is confined to the history of birds. This volume, as well as all the remainder of the book, proves indisputably that what Pliny wrote was from reading and recounting almost entirely. The times when he affirmed that he made a personal investigation, or knew for himself that a thing was true, are so few as to be amazing. The whole work is one enormous compilation, but vastly interesting, because it was written by a Roman old enough to remember when Jesus was crucified near Jerusalem. Therefore what he had to say of any bird in comparison with what the compilers of the Old Testament said is of vast importance.

Pliny was a Roman of wealth, high position, and had access to all the stored learning of past ages. Ranging



THE GEESE OF MAYDOON

One of the oldest pictures in the w



CARR

osed to be the first bird picture.

from his birth anywhere to fifteen hundred years previous, lived Moses, Solomon, Job, and David, and they were studious men of wealth and high position. The difference between their writings lies in the fact that what Bible historians record is colored by the truth, sanity, and clear insight of believers in an Almighty God. What Aristotle, Aristophanes, and Pliny wrote is touched with superstition, paganism, and the improbable.

Pliny drew largely on Aristotle, who divided the birds into eight principal groups. This seemed too complicated for Pliny, so he simplified matters to the last degree and made three groups, which he described in "A General Division of Fowls."

"The first and principal difference and distinction in birds is taken from their feet; for they have either hooked talons, as Hawks, or round long claws, as Hens; or else they be broad, flat, and whole-footed, as Geese, and all the sort in manner of water-fowl."

Pliny first discoursed on the ostrich, and among other things said: "Cloven hoofs have they like red deer, and with them they fight: for good they be to catch up stones withall, and with their legs they whurle them back as they run away, against those that chase them." He next described the phœnix, and as this perhaps is the only description of the famed bird incorporated in a natural history, it is given in full:

"The birds of Ethiopia and India are for the most part of diverse colors, and such as man is hardly able to decipher and describe, but the Phœnix of Arabia passes all others. Howbeit, I can not tell what to make of him: and first of all, whether it be a tale or no, that there is never but one of them in all the world, and the same

not commonly seen. By report he is as big as an eagle; for color, as yellow and bright as gold (namely, all about the neck:) the rest of the body a deep red purple; the tail azure blue, intermingled with feathers among of rose carnation color; and the head bravely adorned with a crest and pennach finely wrought: having a tuft and plume thereupon, right fair and goodly to be seen. Manilius, the noble Roman senator, right excellently seen in the best kind of learning and literature, and yet never taught by any, was the first man of the long Robe, who wrote of this bird at large and most exquisitely. He reporteth, that never man was known to see him feeding: that in Arabia he is held a sacred bird, dedicated unto the sun: that he liveth six hundred and sixty years; and when he groweth old, and begins to decay, he builds himself with the branches and twigs of the Cannell or cinnamon, and Frankincense trees; and when he hath filled it with all sorts of aromatical spices, he yieldeth up his life thereupon.

"He saith, moreover, that of his bones and marrow there breeds at first as it were a little worm: which afterward proveth to be a pretty bird. And the first thing this new Phœnix does, is to perform the obsequies of the former Phœnix late deceased: to translate and carry away his whole nest into the city of the Sun near Panchea, and to bestow it full devoutly there upon the altar. The same Manilius affirmeth that the revolution of the great year so much spoken of, agreeth just with the life of this bird; in which year the stars return again to their first points, and give significations of times and seasons, as at the beginning and withall, that this year should begin at high noon that very day when the sun entereth the sign Aries.

And by his saying, the year of that revolution was by him showed, when P. Lincinius and M. Cornelius were consuls, Cornelius Valerianus writeth, that whiles Q. Plautius and Sex. Papinius were consuls, the Phœnix flew into Egypt. Brought he was hither also to Rome in that time that Claudius Cæsar was Censor, to wit, in the eight hundredth year from the foundation of Rome, and showed openly to be seen in a full and general assembly of the people, as appeared upon the public records: howbeit, no man ever made any doubt, but he was a counterfeit Phœnix, and no better."

He wrote of the bird "Incendiaria," that it was "unlucky as our Chronicles and Annals do witness, in regard of her the city of Rome many a time hath made solemn supplications to pacify the Gods, and to avert their displeasure by her portend." A sentence further he wrote: "But what this bird should be, neither do I know, nor yet find in any writer. Some give this interpretation of Incendiaria, to be any bird whatsoever, that hath been seen carrying fire either from altar or chapel of the Gods. But hitherto I have not found any man who would say directly that he knew what this bird should be." This is not in the least surprising. He quoted Nigidius concerning a bird "called Subis, which used to squash eagle's eggs."

He described a number of other fabled birds, and attached all the current superstition to the history of each, even to the account of the barnyard fowl that spoke. But, as almost all of the birds described are among the list of Bible birds, what is said of them by pagan writers will compare much better if used in the chapter containing the Bible records of the same subject.

Aelian, of Italy, published a rather miscellaneous account of birds and animals 140 A. D., and in 1228 A. D. Albertus Magnus followed with twenty-six volumes, most of which are compilations from Pliny and Aristotle. Belon, Aldrovardus, Willoughby, Ray, and several others followed. Then there came the real founder of ornithology on a scientific basis, the man whose classification of half the important species remains unchanged to-day—Linnæus. His works were published in 1740 A. D., and many revisions have been made. From them down to our time the history of ornithology is well known.

From this brief resume it must be seen that the historians of the Bible wrote from their personal knowledge of their subjects, and that they knew the birds quite as well, and treated of them much more sanely and comprehensively than their contemporaries of other countries, or their followers centuries later. Moses spoke in certain tones, and while we now know that several of the birds he set aside as unclean, according to our first translations, were regarded as great delicacies by the people of other nations at the same time,—as a whole, we easily can recognize our birds of the same species to-day in what he wrote of his.

Nothing gives greater emphasis to the important place birds always have occupied in history than the fact that one of the oldest pictures in the world has birds as its subject. It is a fragment of a fresco taken from a tomb at Maydoon, and now in the museum at Cairo. This picture was painted three thousand years before Christ and near two thousand years before the time of Moses. Six geese are represented, four of which are so accurately done, and in all those cycles the change in species is so

PELICANS

JOB

Only the camera reproduces bird life with fidelity.

small, that they readily can be classified as the ancestors of two species known to-day.

Later the paintings, frescoes, and sculptures of Egypt and Assyria were filled with bird figures, but the work was so poorly done, or else the birds so stiffly conventionalized, that it is a difficult matter to decide whether they are eagles, hawks, or vultures. All of these abounded, and well might have been used in symbol writing to portray strength, endurance, penetration, or rapacity.

Artists of to-day are setting ornithologists the same study. They attempt to illustrate articles with drawings of birds, without having seen a naked and ofttimes no living bird of the species, and so proper contour is lost. Knowing absolutely nothing of anatomy, habits, or characteristics, they attempt to reproduce birds and make amazing caricatures. In the first place, many artists go to museums and draw from a dried skin stretched over a wire frame and stuffed. They might equally as well attempt to use mummies as subjects from which to reproduce living men: for it is quite as lifelike to be shriveled as abnormally rounded out. If one of these men ever does go to a zoological garden and attempt the poor substitute of a confined bird to illustrate the pose and characteristics of a free one, he begins to draw in ignorance of the first great principle of feathering. There are hills and hollows, and a great deal of shape to the anatomy of a bird. One only has to pick up and examine any plucked fowl in the market-place to see that it did not have feathers all over it, and that what it had were of different sizes, and set closely in some places, wide apart in others. Utterly oblivious of these facts, books and periodicals are filled with birds feathered all over

equally, and almost as round as a ball in shape. The only bird pictures ever made with accuracy were done with a camera, which truly reproduces life.

The records of Moses began four thousand years before Christ, and in our day nineteen hundred and nine years afterward—five thousand nine hundred and nine years in all—there is no very great change in the hawk, the eagle, and the vulture. This leads us to wonder how many years before the time of Moses it was that there were birds with twenty vertebræ in their tails and sixteen teeth in their jaws; and how many years previous to that the first serpent, from which all birds are descended, crept from the water and began life upon land and among the trees. Has any one rightly reckoned the age of the earth?

Much has been written concerning the Mistakes of Moses. If that title had been the Mistakes of Habakkuk or Job it would have attracted less attention. There is so much in striking alliteration. I have found several mistakes I shall mention as they occur in the ornithology of the great law-giver, but I discovered one to overshadow them completely in the writings of one of the best-informed ornithologists that ever lived—the author of a dictionary of birds, not a pioneer, but a man of our time having access to everything produced to the present day. He writes that it is his opinion that "white geese were produced by the wicked and inhuman practice of plucking feathers from gray geese while alive, for pillows." He explains that a dark feather prematurely pulled from a bird comes back white. If white geese originated in "the wicked and inhuman practice of plucking gray ones alive," I want to know who plucked the blue herons, brown owls, and gray gulls to produce these white species. Also, who plucked

the black bear, red foxes, and gray rabbits to produce white species among mammals?

The Mistakes of Moses do not appear nearly so great or so numerous as one would expect from the title. They look so very small when compared with those of writers who have had the benefit of centuries more of enlightenment than he. Then, too, it must be remembered that Moses has been translated, revised, and re-edited many times without his knowledge or consent. The beauty of the work of any writer is inevitably marred in translation to another language. A whole English sentence is required to express a thought covered by one small Hebrew word. The point I wish to make was forcefully expressed centuries ago by the grandson of Jesus, the son of Sirach, in a preface to his translation of the book of Ecclesiasticus, now incorporated in many modern Bibles. "For things originally spoken in the Hebrew have not the same force in them when they are translated into another tongue; and not only these, but the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books, have no small difference when they are spoken in their original language."

The greatest difference that I can see between Moses and the scientist is that there is a time when science comes to a dead stop.

It has its theories, but they all end when they reach the origin of matter and life. An ably written article on Panspermy, just published as I write, closes with these words. "Even as of the billions of pollen grains that may be wafted by the wind over the meadows of the earth only one may germinate and flourish into a tree, so of the incalculable germs with which each living world prod-

igally sows the unfathomable depths of space, only a single spore may swim into the embrace of a fallow world.

"The impression to be drawn from this beautiful conception of the transmission of life from star to star is that of the unity of all living creatures. Granted that the universe is studded with planets in all stages of evolution, from gaseous incandescence to ripe and dying spheres, organic life must be as eternal as matter and energy. Somewhere a world is always waiting for a primal, living unit. Life has ever existed and will ever exist. Whence sprang that first germ which fertilized the first cold planet, we shall never know. We have long since abandoned all search for the origin of energy; so must we abandon the hopeless task of tracing to its source the river of universal life."

That is always the end of all scientific investigation. When at last it reaches the hearts of the things we want to know, how matter and life originated, it comes to a granite wall. A wall so long no one ever can go around it, so high no one can surmount it, so thick it is impenetrable, and there science may search, climb, and batter until it is worn out, but the answer never comes. Here it is worlds of satisfaction to have Moses intervene and say, "God created."

We love to believe that He did, because such belief throws us upon instinctive impulse. For there is an instinct in all men, an inborn impulse to mate, to build shelter, to fight for supremacy, to make music, to dance, and to worship. In his hour of dire extremity the most hardened man startles at the sound of his own voice imploring God for help. He can not save himself, therefore he cries into space for rescue by the Unseen.

This impulse to worship is not found in civilized nations alone, it is a universal thing. No savage band ever has been discovered so benighted that it did not worship something, no matter how crude. A bright thing, as the sun, an inanimate thing cut from wood or stone, a living thing, as a tree or an animal, or an element, as the wind, will serve; but worship all men do. No nation ever has been able to face calmly the thought of annihilation. The protest against being wiped out utterly is inborn and universal. That grand old pessimist, Omar Khayyam, expressed himself thus:

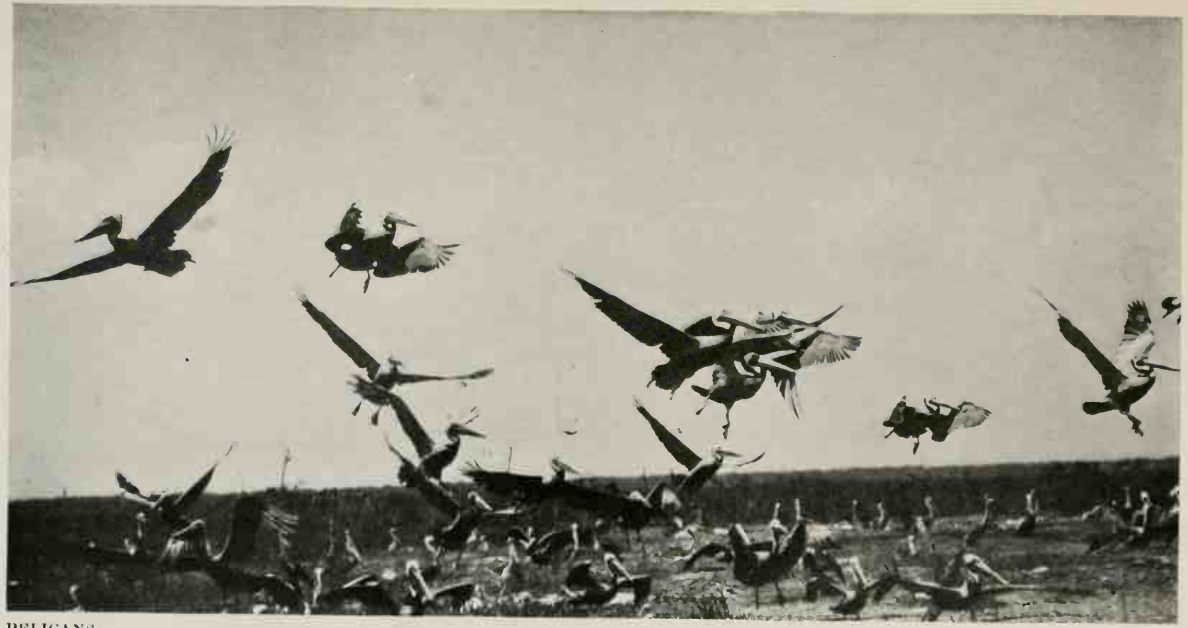
> "Said one among them, surely not in vain,
> My substance from the common earth was ta'en,
> And to this Figure moulded to be broke,
> Or trampled into shapeless earth again."

The man who above all others busied himself with the mistakes of Moses made this point still clearer. Standing beside the grave of a loved brother, in an hour of heart-rending grief, he said, "In the night-time of despair Hope sees a star, and listening Love can hear the rustle of a wing." The star that he saw in his hope was the same that led the children of Israel, and the wing he heard was the shelter under which they took refuge.

THE PLACE

"Ah, the land of the rustling of wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

—Isaiah.



PELICANS

SHIRAS

"A land shadowing with wings."

Chapter II

THE PLACE

When so sane a historian as Isaiah designated a nation as "The land of the rustling of wings," we feel that the birds must have been as numerous as any one other form of creation worth considering. This statement is confirmed by Pliny, who several centuries later wrote that birds flew into Italy in clouds from across the sea; and that at times, weary with winging their long course, they settled in such numbers upon sailing vessels as to sink them.

The lands of the Bible are Canaan, lying along the east end of the Mediterranean Sea, in a narrow hilly and mountainous strip; then the valley of the Jordan, through which flowed the sacred river in which Jesus was baptized; another strip of hills and mountains; and Syria adjoining, which shortly stretched away into desert.

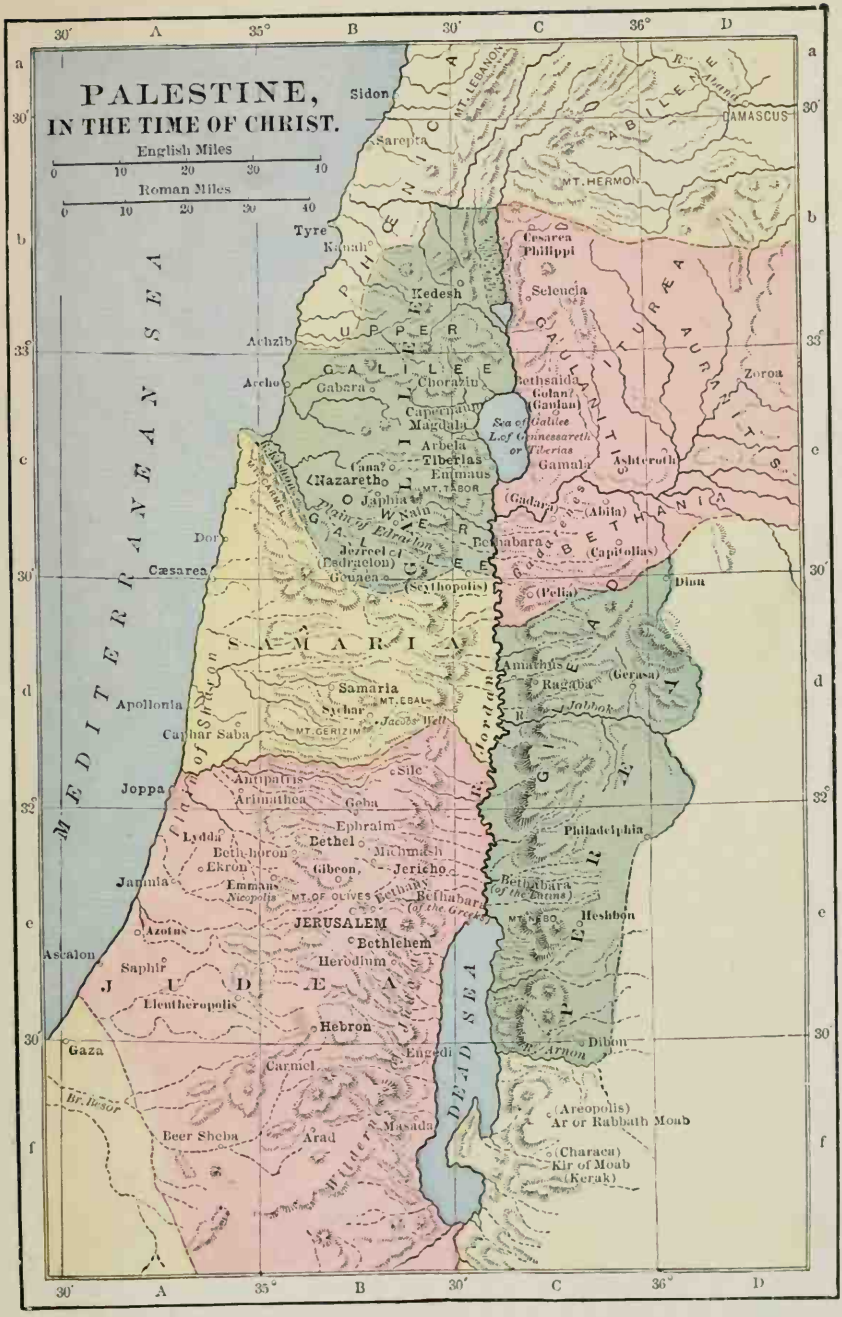
At the southeast of the sea lay Arabia, the Sinai Peninsula, across which Moses led the Hebrews in a great circular journey of three times the length necessary to have reached their destination in a straight line. The southern part of this country is hilly and mountainous, and the northern a wide desert that runs almost to the sea, where Canaan and Egypt touch in a narrow strip along the coast. The Gulf of Akaba lies on the east, stretching half the length of the country; the Red Sea on the south, and the Gulf of Suez forms over half of the western boundary, Egypt the remainder.

Egypt adjoins these countries south of the sea. There is hilly land along the Nile, fertile plains, and then the desert. That desert which the Egyptians tell you stretches away "a march of a thousand days." And, as if evolved with the earth from the beginning, the pyramids stand and challenge us to tell of the time when they were not; and through the ages the Sphynx maintains unbroken silence.

While we marvel at these piles of stone, antiquities of a thousand years at the time of Moses, as if to jest with us from some innermost recess, time heaves out to us a vessel of porcelain, and from the brush-strokes on its bottom a Chinese savant glibly reads, "For lo, the spring is here!" Eternity seems to be not a place toward which we are traveling, but a time from which we came, when we face this evidence, that however old Egypt may be, even in the time of Moses she was young compared with China and India, who previous to those days were possessed of the secret of manufacturing vessels of porcelain and decorating them with the essence of poesy.

Egypt, Arabia, and Canaan are the locations in which the scenes of Bible history were enacted. Here is the very earth trodden by Moses, Solomon, David, Isaiah, Jesus, and John. These are the mountains they climbed, the lakes where they fished, the rivers in which they bathed.

Most of the action of the Bible takes place in Canaan. This little strip of country, one hundred and forty miles in length, and averaging from sixty to one hundred miles in width, lying along the east end of the Mediterranean, had greater variation in climate, soil, vegetation, plant and animal life than any other of the same size in the whole world. Any swift bird could fly the length or


PALESTINE,
IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.
English Miles
0 10 20 30 40
Roman Miles
0 10 20 30 40
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
Kanah
Kedesh
Achzib
Acho
Gabara
Chorazin
Capernaum
Magdala
Arbela
Tiberias
Emmaus
Cana?
Nazareth
Japhia
Nain
Jezreel
(Esdraelon)
Genaea
(Scythopolis)
Dor
Cæsarea
Apollonia
Caphar Saba
Joppa
Lydda
Beth-horon
Ekron
Jamnia
Emmaus
Nicopolis
Azotus
Ascalon
Saphir
Eleutheropolis
Gaza
Br. Besor
Beer Sheba
Carmel
Arad
Masada
Hebron
Engedi
Bethlehem
Herodium
JERUSALEM
Bethany
Bethabara
(of the Greeks)
Bethabara
(of the Latins)
Jericho
Gibeon
Bethel
Ephraim
Michmash
Geba
Silc
Antipatris
Arimathea
Samaria
Sychar
Jacobs Well
MT. EBAL
MT. GERIZIM
MT. OF OLIVES
Plain of Sharon
Plain of Esdraelon
Wilderness of Jeshimon
Jordan
DEAD SEA
Sea of Galilee
L. of Gennesareth
or Tiberias
Bethsaida
Golan?
(Gaulan)
Gamala
Ashteroth
Cesarea
Philippi
Seleucia
Zoroa
Dion
(Gadara)
(Abila)
Bethabara
(Capitolias)
(Pelia)
Amathus
Ragaba
(Gerasa)
Jabbok
Philadelphia
Heshbon
Dibon
R. Arnon
(Areopolis)
Ar or Rabbath Moab
(Characa)
Kir of Moab
(Kerak)
MT. LEBANON
MT. HERMON
R. Abana
DAMASCUS
PHŒNICIA
ABILENE
UPPER GALILEE
GALILEE
GALILEE
GAULANITIS
ITURÆA
AURANITIS
BETHANIA
GADARES
GALILEE
SAMARIA
JUDÆA
PERÆA
GILEAD
30′ A 35° B 30′ C 36° D
a b c d e f
30′ 33° 30′ 32° 30′

breadth of the country in a few hours, yet here lay the fertile Jordan Valley, one thousand three hundred feet below sea level; here rose the snow-capped ranges of Hermon and Lebanon from two to three thousand feet above.

Between these extremes could be found rich valleys, broad, fertile plains, highlands, foothills, and low mountains. David described the natural springs of that land:

> "He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
> They run among the mountains;
> They give drink to every beast of the field;
> The wild asses quench their thirst.
> By them the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,
> They sing among the branches."

There were cold mountain rivulets, dashing through rocky gorges; peaceful rivers crossing the plains and valleys; the great salt sea lying in the interior, the Mediterranean on the west, and the desert stretching away on the east.

Over all a tropical sun streamed, its rays broken by mountains and rank forests; while cool wind from the sea alternated with scorching sirocco from the desert. The whole country was covered with such trees and vegetation as these conditions would induce. In this amazing variety of soil and climate many plants elsewhere unknown developed, and birds native to this country alone.

A collared turtle-dove originated around the Dead Sea; a new species of grackle rocked on the rushes of Merom; a night-hawk unlike any other sailed over valley and plain, and in great numbers the exquisite little sun-bird darted among sweet flowering spice-bushes.

One readily can see how the writers of the Bible in

recording life as they lived it under those geographical conditions, would give to the actors of the book a setting which would seem familiar to readers of all time anywhere on the face of the globe. So true to all lands everywhere are those pictures of life where one day's journey led from snow-capped mountain to fertile valley; from farming, fishing, and carpentering to the wandering life of the tent tribes; and from the grandest court of an earthly king to the wilderness.

Rank vegetation crept everywhere after moisture. There were rushes, water-grasses, and flags growing all along the rivers and around the lakes. The glittering black birds rocked on the sunlit rushes; among them the herons searched for frogs; the brooding rails nested in silence, and the bitterns boomed in the night watches. Frogs croaked along the shores, the crocodile and alligator splashed in the water, and the rhinoceros raised from its wallow and waddled off across country in search of foliage for food.

Along the Nile and up and down the Jordan the laughing kingfisher chuckled in its noisy flight, one of the veriest birds of history, amused, no doubt, at how it had fooled countries older than these. For of all the birds known to the most ancient world, none so had bewildered students and thinkers as the kingfisher. They knew the old, they knew the young, but never a nest or brooding mother could they find, search as they might. For these birds had followed the seacoast and had come down from Greece to perplex these people also. Their Grecian name, alceon, as we translate halcyon, was brought with them.

The Greeks disliked defeat, and so when they were compelled to give up anything they went romancing and

YOUNG BLACKBIRDS STRATTON-PORTER

Young blackbirds cried along the Jordan.

manufactured something to fit the case. They called this cheerful habit mythology, and as it was so much easier to imagine things than to dig to the root of matters, their mythology was almost as copious as their history. When they failed to find the nests of these birds in the trees or on the land, it became evident to them that brooding must take place upon the water. As this seemed rather risky business, even to the Greeks, they decided that the birds nested at the time of the summer solstice, when the waves were calmest, so that there would be some small chance of bringing off the young unharmed.

As the nestlings appeared regularly every season it seemed probable that these birds were favored of the gods, and the Greeks evolved the fiction that halcyons had power to still the waves, so they were venerated by sailors. At Moses' time in their history no one knew where they nested, but their traditions clung to them and followed them across the sea ages later, where their dried bodies were hung in houses to bring good luck, and in belief of their power to prevent harm there was a custom in Germany of packing them among flannels to drive away moths.

Pliny wrote: "The Halcyons are of great name and much marked. The very seas and they that sail thereon know well when they sit and breed." Since he quoted Aristotle so frequently, it seems peculiar that Pliny did not avail himself of the fact that his predecessor had seen a nest, for Aristotle recorded that they were "shaped like a cucumber, the size of a large sponge, and covered." "The material of the nest is disputed, but it appears to be composed of the spines of the belon, for the bird itself lives on fish. It is not easily cut with a sharp knife, but when struck or broken with the hand it divides readily."

Nowhere in Bible lands could be found what we call "hay fields," but grass followed moisture all over the face of Egypt and Canaan, being especially rank in the valley of the Jordan. So there were good nesting sites for lark, quail, and all ground-builders loving grassy shelter.

In the wilderness and scattered all over the face of the country grew at least five acorn-bearing oaks, all of lower habit and more gnarled, twisted, and ragged branching than ours. Hosea wrote: "They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under the oaks, and poplars, and elms, because the shadow thereof is good." There were four varieties of white poplar growing in Palestine, so it is very probable that translation is correct, but they had no tree corresponding to our lordly elm. Neither climate nor soil was productive of our "sky-scraper," and without question the tree to which they referred was the "teil," which we translate turpentine. This tree resembled the oak in trunk and branching, had reddish leaves and clusters of red berries, and one of this species is still pointed out as that upon which Judas hanged himself. These great trees furnished the stout nesting sites chosen by hawks, ravens, and other birds of lofty locations.

The thorn, to which they so frequently referred in the Bible, grew in the form of bushes in Lebanon and along the Dead Sea, and another, which reached great size and bore heavy spikes, flourished in Palestine, on the plains of Gennesaret, and in thickets in the valley of the Jordan. The crown of Christ was woven from the thorns of these trees. Then, as now, the gray shrikes and the doves loved to nest in the protection of the prickly branches, and the young came forth safely in large broods.

The bay tree mentioned by David, who said, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree," was their most profusely growing shrub along lakes and rivers, but not so very common. It was the ancestor of our oleander, which proves that it still retains a habit of sturdy growth by flourishing and blooming abundantly year after year in a tub.

Luke mentioned a sycamine: "And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." This tree is still called "sycamenea" in Greece, and is a mulberry, which grows commonly both black and white. The sycamore mentioned is a relative of the banyan tree, and not at all similar to our sycamore. David, in recording the story of the wrath of God, wrote, "He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost." This indicated the commercial value of the tree, because it was included in a list of precious possessions, such as cattle, flocks, and even human life. The reason for its use in this illustration lay in the fact that it was the common timber of Egypt for furniture, wood work, and mummy cases. It was an evergreen of great growth, having a leaf resembling a mulberry, and fruit like a fig. It grew sparsely on the low plains of Jericho, but not on the high hills of Palestine.

The ash of the Bible was a pine from which idols were made, and the precious ebony the heart-wood of the date. The box was mentioned among the forest trees and was evidently larger than ours, for it was used as hard wood in which to inlay ivory, and also small articles such as combs and spoons were made from it. Isaiah spoke of cut-

ting down the "tall cedars and the choice fir trees." Any pine seems to have been called a cedar in Lebanon. Jeremiah cried to the inhabitants of Lebanon that made their "nest among the cedars." Ezekiel compared the Assyrians to a great cedar of Lebanon, of which he said, "all the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs." Solomon said, "The beams of our house are of cedar, and our rafters are of fir." The firs were "choice," because they were used in making harps and musical instruments, for rafters, ceilings, floors in temples, and ships. Cypress was mentioned as the material from which a heathen god was made, and is thought to be a juniper, not the genuine cypress, which was the mourning tree of the Mohammedans. Isaiah mentioned many trees suitable for agriculture and commerce. "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it." The "nut" tree mentioned is no doubt a walnut which was transplanted from Persia, and grew vigorously in Palestine. Solomon sang:

> "I went down into the garden of nuts,
> To see the green plants of the valley,
> To see whether the vine budded,
> And the pomegrantes were in flower."

The almond was a native fruit tree, which blossomed before leafage, as our cherry and other trees, and from its wood the rod of Aaron was cut.

The palm tree was almost worshiped in Bible lands

BROODING RAIL STRATTON-PORTER

The brown rail brooded among the water grasses.

because it provided shade and fruit in otherwise barren, desert country. There was not only the date palm, but a number of species, in all some two hundred and fifty varieties. These were the especially loved nesting sites of the doves. The palms grew on the plains of Jericho, in the ravines along the Jordan, and around the Sea of Galilee, and are still growing at Beirut. Palms grow a tall stem from thirty to eighty feet, and a plume of feathery foliage at the top makes them the most graceful and beautiful trees of the plains and valleys. On account of their loveliness their Hebrew name, tamar, was frequently given to women. To weary travelers no spot on the plains was so welcome as a grove of palms, which almost always surrounded water. Moses wrote, in describing one stage of the flight of the Children of Israel, "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three score and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the water."

Apples are mentioned by Solomon, but as they are described as having a gold fruit, silver leaves, and being sweet to the taste, they seem more like our apricots.

The citron was the largest fruit, a native of Media. It had larger leaves than an orange, and exquisite purple bloom. Moses found it suitable for worship, for he commanded, "And ye shall take you on the first the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and the willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." This expression "boughs of goodly trees" is translated from a Hebrew word meaning "fruits," and as the citron was the finest fruit, it was supposed to be intended and is used to-day on the feast of Tabernacles.

Hosea recorded that he "found Israel like grapes in the wilderness: I saw your fathers as the first ripe at the fig tree." Solomon said, "The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell." It was Samuel who recorded of Abigail, of whom all housewives have heard, that she "made haste and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs." Figs were so nearly the staff of life that the people trembled when God threatened to smite these trees as a punishment. They grew all over Syria, and attained great size. The fruit was pear-shaped, the leaf wide, and the bark smooth. It was the first tree named in the Bible. The figs were eaten green, and also packed in cakes, and dried for winter use. No doubt the robins, jays, and lapwings had their full share.

One of the first trees mentioned by Moses, the most abundant in Palestine, and one of the most blessed of the Promised Land, was the olive tree, that yielded a great abundance of fruit and oil. It formed the foundation of the food from trees, and was most esteemed. Also its wood was fine-grained, of beautiful amber color, and considered the best thing from which to make the body of the cherubim, and the door posts and the temple pillars.

The pomegranate was also such pleasant and popular fruit that many towns took its Hebrew name, rimmon. This was a tree of low growth, bearing large, blood-red flowers, and fruit with a juicy red pulp, from which a cooling drink was made that was a great blessing in those countries. Blood oranges are now produced by grafting an orange branch on a pomegranate tree. These trees

KINGFISHER STRATTON-PORTER

The "Laughing Jackass" of remote antiquity.

also were so appreciated that they were thought sufficiently sacred to use in temple worship. Solomon sang, "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate."

These and other trees grew in Bible lands, over mountains, through valleys, on plains, in cultivated estate, and absolute wildness, so that travelers were sure of food almost anywhere, and might wander as they chose. Among such trees flew shrikes, sparrows, doves, and jays, saucy then as now; robins, always loving fruit trees, and sweet-voiced chats. There is a beautiful legend of the robin. The bird was said to have been a uniform gray until it stained its breast carrying succor to Christ on the cross, and since, the red badge of mercy always has covered its breast. With its joyous song of "Cheer up! Cheer up!" it should be added to the symbols of the Red Cross Society.

No man knew what it meant to live upon the land he owned and cultivate his crops in peace. Wild tribes from the Syrian desert constantly ravaged the eastern borders of Palestine from Lebanon to Edom, and wandering Arabs from the desert of Shur came up and pillaged the Philistines and Lower Canaan. Then in the fastnesses of Edom, along the rocky and almost impenetrable fortresses of the Jabbok, in deserted tombs near Carmel, and in numerous caves close Gennesaret, homed bands of professional robbers. These men were so wild and fierce they pillaged and killed without mercy, and when plunder was scarce, lived upon the flesh of eagles, hawks, wild goats, and hares.

Again, mostly in the name of the Lord, tribe after tribe of the settled residents of the country arose, anni-

hilating neighboring tribes with whom they had differences; confiscating movable goods and flocks, tearing down walls and villages, and enslaving all of the people not killed in battle, so that the face of the land was scattered with ruins. For these reasons people were driven to establish cities. They were compelled to build very small, strong houses, set compactly, and surrounded with high, heavy walls, having small gates for entrance, and to set watches at night to arouse the sleepers at the approach of anything unusual, and by day to call the workers from the fields in case an enemy tried to creep upon them. When the villages were so small the people were too poor to afford a wall, they built in the same way and stationed watches in a high tower.

All cultivated fields lay outside the city gates and were tilled by men, women, and children. Here grew the wheat, barley, lentils, mandrakes, melons, the large vineyards, and fruit orchards. Here flocked the doves, chats, robins, blackbirds, larks, ground sparrows, quail, and partridges.

Each man had to be content with a very small space beside his home to supply his family in case of siege. In these gardens a few trees were planted, grape and melon vines; gourds were grown for shade, and spices, rue, saffron, wormwood, and mustard. Wild doves nested even in the trees of these gardens, jays, robins, sparrows, and sun-birds, and swallows swarmed under the eaves. Many of these small gardens must have been very beautiful.

From the necessity of being inclosed within walls arose the custom in Palestine of spending much time upon the housetops. The elevation afforded fresh air, neighboring villages could be seen, the landscape enjoyed, and the

country watched for enemies. Here was a splendid place to observe the flight of great pelicans of the coast and salt sea, cranes and storks from the cedars of Lebanon, herons from the Jordan, owls and night-hawks of the ruins; to hear the songs of the field and garden birds; to breathe the perfumed air rising all around them; and to revel in the glory of color, surpassed nowhere on earth.

Solomon sang a musical, spicy song of such gardens as these:

> "Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates,
> With precious fruits;
> Henna with spikenard plants,
> Spikenard and saffron,
> Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense,
> Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices,
> Thou art a fountain of gardens,
> A well of living waters,
> And flowing streams from Lebanon.
> Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south;
> Blow upon my garden,
> That the spices thereof may flow out."

Again, he said, "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire, in the vineyards of Engedi." The force of this lies in the fact that camphire, which bore exquisite large white and yellow flowers of great fragrance, grew near Engedi by the Dead Sea.

Then, as now, mustard drifted from cultivated places and spread everywhere in great beds of waving yellow. It was the Master Himself who said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among

herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

No doubt in that favorable climate mustard grew much larger than with us, where it still attains the size and shape of a small tree, and the one bird inseparably connected with it is, I have no doubt, the same which chattered among its branches as Jesus sat by the sea and put the mustard into a parable—the goldfinch. These dainty little birds are always found near gardens and seed plants; one almost might imagine they had colored their coats with mustard pollen, from the frequency with which they are found near the plant. In brooding time they have large families, and many of the seeds they gather are carried to their young.

As Jesus sat on the ship and talked to the people on the shore in those simple parables, I think His eyes were ranging along the coast and back across the land, so that He spoke of the common, every-day things, which all could see and easily understand. He pointed out the sower and his seed, the mustard seed, the woman and the meal, and the net that was cast into the sea. As I read the parable of the mustard seed I always like to think that, as He made it, He could see a swaying patch of wild mustard, and in the most skimming, joyous song of all birdland the goldfinches darting over it, crying, "Put seed in it! Put seed in it!" and shouting, "Pt'seet!" "Pt'see!" to each other, just as they do all around our homes to-day.

Many of their spices were imported from Persia and India. But Pliny wrote of Happy Arabia—the land of spices. Solomon spoke of a garment that was "like the smell of Lebanon." That warm air must have been per-

SHRIKE STRATTON-PORTER

Baby shrike quarreled in the thorn thickets.

fumed with the heavy sweetness of citron, myrtle, and pomegranate, and pungent with odors of growing spices.

In their gardens outside the walls they grew onions, garlic, and leek; and peas and beans in large quantities for winter as well as summer use. One of the chief vegetables of Egypt was the cucumber. They are old as history, and are valued food. Isaiah wrote of a "lodge in a garden of cucumbers," proving that at times people built outside the walls of the cities and remained at night to guard their most precious crops.

Mandrake was a member of the potato family, bearing a yellow fruit the size of a plum; and melons were grown in successive crops from May to November, and often weighed as much as thirty pounds. Solomon wrote:

> "The mandrakes give a smell,
> And at our gates are all manner of pleasant
> fruits, new and old."

No wonder the birds were numerous, and so tame they could be snared and netted.

Gourds made phenomenal growth, often a foot a day, and were planted for shade.

All fruit-growers cultivated grapes, and they grew wild in thickets and forests. Wine was carried on long journeys where water was scarce. People as a rule were compelled to drink wine at home, for in many localities the water was strongly alkaline, and could not be used with safety. We read in Solomon:

> "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
> Let us lodge in the villages.
> Let us get up early to the vineyards;
> Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
> And the tender grape appear,
> And the pomegranates be in flower."

Isaiah sang this song describing a vineyard:

"My well-beloved had a vineyard
In a very fruitful hill:
And he made a trench about it,
And gathered out the stones thereof,
And planted it with the choicest vine,
And built a tower in the midst of it,
And also hewed out a winepress therein:
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes."

It was a great blessing that these countries produced cucumbers, melons, grapes, and pomegranates. Whether the lands inclined to desertness are especially provided with these juicy fruits and vegetables by nature or by the Almighty, it is the happiest thing in the world that they grow there.

In their cultivated fields grew barley, the most universal grain known; and cane, that might have been like our sugar-cane or a calamus, from which an essence was extracted. David, in adoring the Almighty, wrote a beautiful corn song, which is found in the Sixty-fifth Psalm, but it must be remembered that the grain to which he referred was not what we call corn. In all probability it was our wheat:

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,
Thou greatly enrichest it; the river of God is full of water:
Thou providest them corn, when Thou hast so prepared the earth.
Thou waterest her furrows abundantly; Thou settlest the ridges thereof;
Thou makest it soft with showers; Thou blessest the springing thereof.

GOLDFINCH STRATTON-PORTER

Goldfinch were all around Jesus when He spoke the parable of the grain of mustard seed.

Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness;
And Thy paths drop fatness.
They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness;
And the hills are girded with joy.
The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered over with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing."

Flax was cultivated for cloth; lentils were cut for food for stock, and threshed as wheat; some of the very poor ate them. They also grew millet, rye, and three varieties of wheat. The harvest was from April until June. Crops were cut by hand, and trampled out on threshing-floors by cattle. All these grains furnished food for every variety of seed eater. Feathered creatures became so numerous that Jesus cried, "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them!" In the parable of the Sower, He made it plain that the birds found food at seed time also: "The sower went forth to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it."

Wherever I read in the Bible of harvesting, I think only of the field of Boaz; and Ruth following the gleaners to garner what from time immemorial was left for the "poor and the stranger." I can see the waving barley falling before the reapers, and the glad face of Ruth as the "mighty man of wealth" spoke kindly to her, offering her food and protection; and then I always hear a lark singing above. The bird has had several thousand years of practice since that time, but I hope it sang the same serene notes of heaven-born sweetness to Ruth and Boaz

that it does to us; and I hope it wore just as gay a coat when it slipped through those grass and grain fields as it has to-day.

There were masses of flowers to attract the birds to Bible lands, large, brightly colored, and highly perfumed blooms. Lilies are frequently mentioned. Not our calla, ascension, or lily of the valley, but any flower of the lily kind, tulip, ranunculus, or anemone. A real lily of red color flourished on the plains of Gennesaret, and iris and water lilies grew in profusion. Anemones still thrive everywhere, and travelers believe them to have been the original "lilies of the field." Their rose is thought to be our narcissus, as no roses grew in the Holy Land, except in Lebanon. Saffron was cultivated for its flowers. Many of their fruit trees were exquisite, not flowering like our small and almost universally white and pale-pink blossoms, but bearing large clusters of strong color and almost sickening sweetness.

Almond branches in bloom were carried to the temples for decoration. The camphire bore large clusters of white and yellow flowers. The exquisite pale purple blossoms of the citron were used in home and temple decoration in Palestine. The wild myrtle had glossy green leaves and big waxy white flowers, and the pomegranate bloom was large and blood-red. All these attracted myriads of insects, that in turn furnished bird-food.

But of all decoration the palm leaf was the favorite. There were two good reasons for this. In that warm climate flowers withered soon, while a palm branch held shape and color, and it was sacred to all the people as a symbol of rest and peace. Palm branches bound on the right with the white bloom of the myrtle, and on the left

with the pale purple of citron, were the badge of desert life and were carried by the Jews to wave at the feast of the Tabernacles. Afterward these were taken home and dried, to preserve as sacred relics. These emblems were carried by the multitude who escorted Jesus on His entry into Jerusalem, and the effect must have been most beautiful.

Many weeds are mentioned in a comparative way, so we infer that industry was required to grow crops then as now. Brambles seem to have referred to thorns, briers, or thickets which interfered with cultivation. Micah, discoursing on men of folly or foolishness, said, "The best of them is a brier: the straightest is as it were taken from a thorn hedge." Cockles in the same way seem to have meant any troublesome weed of bad odor. Tares were a kind of rye-grass with a poison seed, which gave much trouble among wheat, rye, and millet. Nettles stung then as now, and thistles such as we know, only tall as a "horse and its rider," had to be battled with: but all of them fed and attracted the birds, and no doubt even then the goldfinches lined their nests with thistle down. Job concluded a great outburst of self-vindication, in which he enumerated all his charities and efforts at godly living, with the demand that if he had failed in these things, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley."

Solomon was such a prince of poets that he made poetry even concerning the weed-grown fields and vineyards of the indolent:

> "I went by the field of the slothful,
> And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

And lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I beheld,
And considered well.

I saw,
And received instruction.
'Yet a little sleep,
A little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep'—
So shall thy poverty come as a robber;
And thy want as an armed man."

Scattered all over Egypt were cities, walled towns, and villages; the climate permitted tent dwelling, and wandering tribes lived off the land. There were horses, but as they were connected with the worship of the sun by the Egyptians, they were not bred save for chariot and war purposes. Cattle and asses were used as burden-bearers. Cattle were grown for food, sacrifice, and trampling out grain in threshing. Swine were kept and eaten by all save the Jews and Phœnicians, who classed pork as unclean food. Goats were herded in large flocks for their milk, and sheep for food and wool. Both of these were used for sacrifice in religious rites, the hair in weaving, and the skins for water and wine bottles.

Cinnamon bear and wolves are still found in the ravines of Galilee and the mountains of Hermon. Deer are abundant in Syria, and were permitted in Bible times as food. Hart was a daily article of diet at Solomon's table. Hyena, jackal, leopard, and lion ranged the mountains and wildernesses. Of smaller land animals there were the badger, hare, hedgehog, porcupine, weasel, lizard, bat, and mouse. Upon the dead of these the vultures

LARK NEST STRATTON-PORTER

The lark nested in the grain fields of Boaz.

feasted: upon the young, the eagles; and on the small, the owls.

Wolves and jackals had been tamed and bred through generations into dogs, and although they are not mentioned in the Bible, cats were common and so sacredly held in Egypt that at death their bodies were preserved, and deposited in an especial shrine at Bubastis. Apes were imported, and leopards confined for pets.

The insects mentioned are flies, lice, fleas, beetles, locusts, moths, spiders, and bees, all of which furnished more bird-food. The hived bees of England, Southern Europe, and our country are from Bible lands, and there were wild bees in myriads attracted by the aromatic odor of flowers, and spice and gum-bearing bushes. In Psalms you will find this line, "They compassed me about like bees," so you may be sure they had been seen by David. Solomon wrote in his Proverbs this epigram on honey and wisdom:

"My son, eat thou honey, for it is good,
And the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:
So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul:
If thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward,
And thy hope shall not be cut off."

As there were goats, bees, and grapes everywhere, even the most humble were able to offer the traveler "wine, milk, and honey."

Moses said in a general summing up of the conditions that existed in the Promised Land: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills: a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olives, and

honey: a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it: a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee." Again, he spoke before a great assembly of the people of Israel the words of a song in which he described the inheritance of Jacob:

"He made him to ride on the high places of the earth,
And he did eat the increase of the field;
He made him suck honey out of the rock,
And oil out of the flinty rock;
Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs,
And rams of the breed of Basham, and goats,
With the fat of kidneys of wheat;
And of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine."

It was the son of Sirach who wrote in Ecclesiasticus, "The chief of all things necessary for the life of man are water, and fire, and iron, and salt, and flour of wheat, and honey, and milk, the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing."

In the days of Isaiah, Solomon, and David, men had accumulated great wealth and wore raiment of fine linen of bright colors, and decked themselves with precious stones. The refinement of the times may be judged by the significance of these lines:

"As a signet of carbuncle
In a setting of gold,
So is a concert of music in a banquet of
wine;
As a signet of emerald
In a work of gold,
So is a strain of music with pleasant wine."

People of wealth were served by small armies of slaves, and their homes, temples, and synagogues were profusely decorated in silver, ivory, pure gold, and jewels.

Isaiah, in describing the daughters of Zion, said that they were "haughty, and walked with stretched necks and wanton eyes, mincing as they went." He enumerated "anklets, cauls, crescents, pendants, bracelets, mufflers, headtires, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, rings, nose jewels, festival robes, mantles, shawls, satchels, hand-mirrors, fine linen, turbans, and veils" as articles of apparel. As they had all these things, it should be no cause for astonishment that they also had the "lady" he mentions, since they seem to have had all her accessories. Many of the tent-dwellers had amassed much wealth in flocks and, while following vegetation to afford grazing, lived in great circumstance. Their large tents were of tanned skins, and their rugs priceless.

There were musical instruments, and musicians to play them, and artists to carve statues and paint pictures. David was an accomplished performer on the harp. One of his sons made a long list of the worldly goods he had accumulated which reads very like an inventory of the possessions of a rich man of to-day.

Civilization was so old that methods, customs, and forms of living in Bible lands were practically the same that they are now. It was so old that all bird and animal forms were almost identical with the same species of to-day. It was so old that Moses looked to the pyramids as an antiquity, a thousand years before his time, and so new that he never had seen a chicken.

In almost every instance the birds here mentioned and the quotations given are taken from Moulton's "Modern

Reader's Bible," which as a whole I regard as much more even translation, more connected narrative, and more scholarly deduction than the older versions. In a few instances I prefer the phrasing of the old versions as to me more expressive and poetical, or indicating more clearly the bird that I think was intended by the author of the text. Where I have used these quotations I have indicated their origin.

My warmest thanks are due the Hon. George Shiras, 3rd; the Rev. Herbert K. Job, Hon. E. S. Cameron, Mr. Henry W. Lanier, and the Cawston Ostrich Farm, of this country, Miss Doris Forescue Carr, and Mr. Spooner, of London, and Herr Ottomar Anschutz, of Berlin, for kindly assisting me to those parts of the illustration bearing their names. In two cases where I could not secure the names of the photographers whose studies I used, I credited them to the person through whose agency they were procured. There is no claim made that the birds of these illustrations are those of Bible lands and times. They are merely our nearest and most available family of those species. They are the birds of which *we think* when we read, "Her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves." "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?" "As a hen doth gather her brood under her wings."

THE BIRDS OF THE POETS

"He shall cover thee with his feathers,
And under his wings shalt thou trust."

—David.

ROBIN NEST STRATTON-PORTER

"I will trust in the covert of thy wings."

Chapter III

THE BIRDS OF THE POETS

Poetry might be defined roughly as the most appealing manner in which a thought that touches the heart can be expressed. The connecting link between the birds and the poets is very strong. Feathered creatures have a beauty of form and motion, a sweetness of song, a defenselessness against the elements, a wonderful ability in nest-building, a faithfulness in brooding, a fearlessness in defending their young, an attachment to their frail homes, and a devotion to each other that marks them as the especial property of the poets. There is in bird-life a constant appeal to our affection and sympathy, and continual comparison is suggested between their life processes and ours. We love the birds, and whoever writes of them with a touch of the divine tenderness of poesy makes instant appeal to our hearts.

Long before exquisite thought had been harnessed and worked down to a thing of rhyme, meter, and carefully measured feet, the historians of the Bible were making the very essence of poetic expression on many subjects. On none did their particular genius soar higher than when writing of the birds, or using some of their habits or attributes in comparison with men. These poets of the dawn knew little about measuring their words into symmetrical periods and covering a page with graceful rhymes

to express a single thought. They conceived their poetic idea, and then studied to strip it of every unnecessary word, in order to present the naked thought more prominently. Our rhyming and jingling may be soothing and musical, but who in these days offers you a thought clothed in the refined utterance and with the majestic expression of the ancient poets?

The covers of the Bible are almost bursting with the most forceful poems expressed in as clear-cut utterance as was ever conceived by man. Wonderful volumes could be made of chosen examples, but in this chapter I must of necessity confine myself as closely as I can to the birds (which is an admission that I am not able to do so entirely.) I find parts that demand to be given place.

In the days when life was comparatively simple, as contrasted with the complications of modern cities, business, politics, and social usages and customs, men lived very near the earth, and so nature touched them closely and taught them largely, as is proven by the books of David and Isaiah. Every instant of comprehension of nature brought them closer in touch with the Almighty Force behind it, so that the Spirit was in every utterance they made, and poetry throbbed in their brains as blood pulsed in their hearts.

Moses could not write the books of generations, record the history of the exodus, and lay down the laws of government without here and there breaking into poetry. When this work was accomplished, in the last of Deuteronomy, he reached a culmination, and sang for the Children of Israel the songs of Moses and the Lamb. Once, "in the ears of all the assembly of Israel," Moses recited the song of "The Lord our Rock." It commences:

"Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth:
My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My speech shall distil as the dew;
As the small rain upon the tender grass,
And as the showers upon the herb:
For I will proclaim the name of our Lord:
Ascribe ye greatness unto our God."

With such a beginning it is easy to see how Moses, in pouring out his heart at the close of life, reached a climax of impassioned utterance in this poem that leaves it standing monumental in the literature of nations.

This thought of Moses, that he wished his teachings to refresh his people "as the small rain upon the tender grass" in the great spring rejuvenation of the whole earth, suggests the Spring Song of Solomon, but they are different. Moses described spring in comparison; Solomon celebrated the season. His song is found in that chapter beginning with the incomparable lines:

"I am a rose of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.
As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.
As the apple among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And His fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
And His banner over me was love."

These lines appeal to me as so perfect that any attempt at improvement would be sacrilege. They prepare one for the cloud-covered heights touched constantly by the

genius of Solomon. He continued the chapter in alternating dialogue as between a bridegroom and bride, making their words celebrate the glory and the calling of the Church: then to the bride he assigned the Spring Song, and he must have been thinking of Lebanon with its sweet airs, fragrant spices, flowers, fruit trees, and song birds.

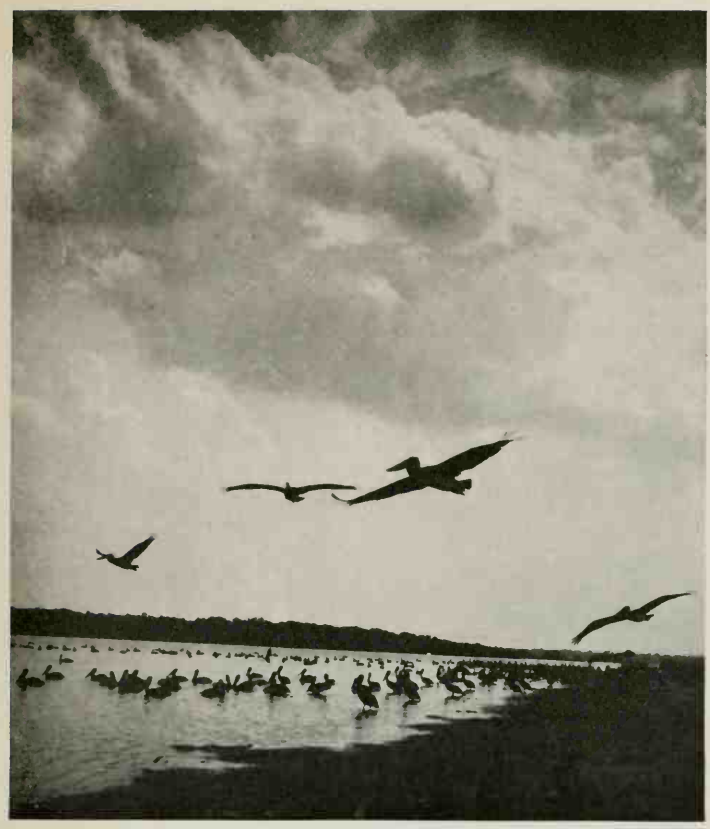
"For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom,
They give forth their fragrance."

Then Solomon in a song, addressed the Almighty as if He were a dove:

"O my dove,
That art in the clefts of the rock,
In the covert of the steep place,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice,
For sweet is thy voice,
And thy countenance is comely."

In this manner the attributes of the beautiful rock dove, that nested in shelving granite and wild places, served to portray the Creator. And a little later, in an attempt to materialize Jehovah, this poet twice used the birds:

"My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.



PELICANS SHIRAS

"I will haste me to a shelter,
From the stormy wind and tempest."

His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks;
Washed with milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
As banks of sweet herbs."

This I consider unsurpassed of its kind. Solomon was so very great he never amplified his thought until he lost it. Just a few clear outlines sufficed, and literature never sustained greater loss than that we have handed down to us, only so few of the one thousand and five poems he recorded that he wrote. His comparisons and poetic imagery never have been equaled. Throughout his songs the most striking lines greet us and, after these thousands of years, set our hearts singing. He was a master of the art of encompassing a poem in a line, as were the ancients of many nations.

Take for example that vessel previously mentioned, that was found in the pyramids. On the bottom was written in Chinese this poem, clear cut and concise as the stroke of a skilled surgeon.

"For, lo, the spring is here!"

All of the showers and flowers, bowers and hours, that could be strung together to tell of April cloud, tree gold, flower bloom, migrating birds, bleating lamb, and babbling brook, could do no more than to suggest to us a small part of the complete glory of the rejuvenation of earth: then why struggle with it? Oceans of words can tell us nothing new or different from that which we were born to enjoy once every season. The least suggestion of any part of that picture instantly conjures the whole of it: then why not content ourselves with merely, "For, lo, the spring is here!"

Historians tell us that when a Chinese poet achieves a gem like that he goes out alone and sits silently before the most exquisite spectacle in nature possible to him, and worships his genius. Small wonder! Any one who can eliminate words, dispense with rhymes, and yet put his soul into his theme until it lives century after century, has genius, not only for his own, but for the whole world's worship. Perhaps Bible poets were just a trifle more verbose than the Chinese, but the examples they set us are such as those poetically inclined might follow prayerfully. The history of the world does not produce greater poets nor stylists to equal Solomon, David, Job, and Isaiah. Allow these complete poems of Solomon to represent him in comparison with like work from any country:

"We will remember thy love more than wine."
"Many waters can not quench love."
"Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb."
"For, lo, the winter is past!"
"My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Then, in one great poetic outburst, such lines as these combined in one of the masterpieces of all time:

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of the Lord.
Many waters can not quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his
house for love,
It would utterly be contemned."

David was equally as great a poet as Solomon, but there was a wide difference in their style. The very thought of Solomon was colored by his riches and power. His writings were not only touched with the scarlet and gold of royal life, but they pulsed hot with the heart-blood of a strong and lusty man. To a great extent all Bible scenes had an outdoor background. The lines of Solomon are like a field of ripe wheat thickly set with purple poppies and crimson lilies.

David was a king of great wealth also, but there was sweetness and humility about him that was infinitely touching. He wrote the tenderest things with divine purity. His imagery was very simple, but wonderfully appealing. If none of his historians had recorded it, I always should have been sure that David was a musician as well as a poet, and the harp the instrument on which he played and, without doubt, to which he sang. The pomp, power, and riches of royal life tinctured the very blood of Solomon and gave color to his writings. The lines of David are full of appeal, touched with rejoicing, and tempered by a white flame of holiness. His writings are like a bed of snowy lilies blooming in a tender valley under the sweep of fragrant winds. His first bird-song resembles Chinese poetry:

"I will trust in the covert of Thy wings."

David said of himself, "I know all the fowls of the mountains," and his writings and the manner in which he incorporated the birds proved that he was very familiar with them; not casually, as any other aspect of nature, but intimately in their home life. No doubt he became acquainted with all of them when, as a boy, he herded

the great flocks of his father as they fed over the hills and pastures. What he recorded of them proved his heart exceedingly gentle and tender. No other Bible scribe wrote things of such pure heart-interest as David. Watching the parent bird move over her nest to shelter the helpless young, he saw a picture of trusting love, and so he cried out to the Almighty, "I will trust in the covert of *Thy* wings."

Again, with the same thought in mind, he broke into the most exquisite poetic utterance when he assured those to whom he spoke of the care and tenderness of the Almighty:

> "He shall cover thee with His feathers,
> And under His wings shall thou trust."

David's knowledge of bird habits was in his mind when he penned that Song of Trust, which is a beautiful example of his faith in God and his art as a poet:

> "In the Lord I put my trust;
> How say ye to my soul,
> Flee as a bird to your mountain?"

The rocky fastnesses of the very tops of the mountains were the especial property of the eagles. When, after long ranging far from home, they captured prey for hunger-tortured young, or barely escaped the arrows of bowmen, and went flashing across the sky faster than any living thing could traverse earth, the observant eye of David caught the full force of the picture they made. So he cried to his soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain." The unparalleled beauty of these lines fired the heart of another poet ages later, and based upon them he wrote

SWALLOW STRATTON-PORTER

"A bird of the air shall carry thy voice,
And that which hath wings shall tell of the matter."

one of the most appealing and refined outbursts of song ever used in worship:

"Flee as a bird to your mountain,
Thou who art weary of sin,
Close by the clear, cooling fountain,
There mayst thou wash and be clean!"

Then a musician read those lines until the ecstasy of David began to swell in his soul, and music touched with Divinity to equal the words flowed from his finger tips.

When David sang the Exile's Song of Rejoicing over his deliverance, and praised the Almighty for His care of the Church, he uttered a high bird-note:

"Blessed be the Lord,
Who hath not given us a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of
the fowlers:
The snare is broken and we are escaped."

This makes one see good feeding-ground, the scarcely concealed snare, the unsuspecting bird walking straight into it, the quick tightening of the hair, and the wings that an instant ago ranged cloud spaces, fluttering on the earth, every throe of the struggle making the snare cut deeper, and one hears the sharp, wild cry of pain and fear.

In my work in the fields I take wild birds into my hands more frequently than you would believe. Several times in a season I find a young female struggling on the ground, unable to deposit her first egg, from its unusual size; often a mother bird snares herself with a string or hair she has woven into her nest; many times an ill-chosen bathing-place weights a bird's feathers with crude oil past carrying. I know the throbbing pulsations of

the captive wild bird-heart against my fingers, when it leaps and pumps, the sharp cries sound wholly unlike the usual bird-voice, and the tiny thing bites frantically at the hand that would give it life. This is the fear that is in the heart of the snared bird as it struggles, and then—thank gracious Heaven!—sometimes the snare is broken, and it escapes. Back among the tree-tops, fanning the air with free wing, who shall paint its exultant joy?

The tender heart of King David had been touched by this sight, and so when he saw his loved people walking into traps and snares set for them by the wicked, this comparison came to him, applicable as no other. When by personal effort and divine aid the snare was broken, and they escaped, well might David sing in exultation!

It was not always song. There were many times when David prayed poetry. Once, in pleading for the vindication of the righteous, he begged of the Almighty:

> "Keep me as the apple of the eye,
> Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings,
> From the wicked that spoil me,
> My deadly enemies, that compass me about."

Another instance where he used the birds in comparison can be found in the Fifty-fifth Psalm, which in places is equally as great as the Twenty-third. In this Psalm of prayer there are to be found the basic lines of the song, "I will pray." "Morning, noon, and evening, I will pray," runs one line. It contains, too, a couplet which has sustained faltering millions throughout ages since the days of David:

> "Cast thy burden upon the Lord,
> And He shall sustain thee."

In fact, it appeals to me that David furnished more lines that have been used as the foundation thought of exquisite songs and anthems, and more quotable poems which comfort the heart, than any other Bible writer. Of them all, save the Master Himself, to me David is the most lovable; so lovable that it is no marvel that the beauty of his heart and soul should tincture his work. I should like to begin with, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks," and review the lines of David, quoting all I know that have been used as the theme of appealing songs and anthems, but I must keep to my birds. The most exquisite reference of David is in this prayer:

> "And I said, O that I had wings like a dove!
> Then would I fly away and be at rest,
> Lo, then would I wander far off,
> I would lodge in the wilderness.
> I would haste me to a shelter
> From the stormy wind and tempest."

Only those who have felt the touch of the healing hand as they gazed upon loved faces stilled in the sleep of death while the singers chant softly, "O that I had wings like a dove!" know how to appreciate fully the great heart of King David.

He was great, too, when he extolled the Almighty in a kind of poetical appreciation, and twice in these instances he mentioned the birds. In the Eighth Psalm, when he praised the Almighty as King, and exalted man as His viceroy on earth, he cried:

> "O Lord, our Lord,
> How excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

Who has set Thy glory upon the heavens,
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou
established strength,
Because of Thine adversaries,
That Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;
What is man that Thou art mindful of him?
Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

For Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of
Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.

All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea;
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

Again, in what might be called a Festal Hymn, he mentioned feathered creatures in his poems of praise of the Almighty:

"Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps:
Fire and hail, snow and vapor;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word:

Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl:

KINGBIRD

STRATTON-PORTER

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place."

Kings of the earth and all peoples:
Princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children:

Let them praise the name of the Lord;
For His name alone is exalted!"

There is a poetic outburst in Ecclesiastes, in which the birds are given a couplet that never has been surpassed, so that I will quote the whole of it:

"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth;
Or ever the evil days come,
And the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:

Or ever the sun,
And the light,
And the moon,
And the stars,
Be darkened,
And the clouds return after the rain:

In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,
And the grinders shall cease because they are few,
And those that look out of the windows be darkened,
And the doors shall be shut in the street;
When the sound of the grinding is low,
And one shall rise up at the voice of a bird,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high,
And terrors shall be in the way;

And the almond tree shall blossom,
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,
And the caper-berry shall burst:

Because man goeth to his long home,
And the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
Or the golden bowl be broken,
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
Or the wheel be broken at the cistern:

And the dust return to the earth,
As it was:
And the spirit return unto God
Who gave it."

When the preacher wrote these lines he would have been surprised if he could have known that thousands of years after his death, in lands yet to be discovered, and language yet to be evolved, other ministers would repeat his words with the most solemn inflection to the accompaniment of the dripping tears of untold millions; that what he wrote would bring comfort to those who mourned as they gave back to dust their beloved dead, and could endure the giving only in the belief that the spirit did return to the God who gave it.

There are only twelve short chapters in the writings of the preacher, but included in them, taking into consideration the small amount of text they contain, there can be found as many sayings casually quoted to-day, usually with little idea of their origin, as in an equal amount of the writings of any other Bible scribe. He said of himself that he sought to find "acceptable words," and that what he wrote was "upright," even "truth." That he did find "acceptable words" is proven by our daily repetition of many of them, and that they live with

time proves their truth. As commonly quoted, we owe to him:

"All is vanity."
"A little bird told me."
"Eat, drink, and be merry!"
"Cast thy bread upon the waters."
"There is a fly in the ointment."
"There is a time for everything."
"There is nothing new under the sun."
"Better a living dog than a dead lion."
"The lips of a fool will swallow himself."
"A dream cometh from the multitude of business."
"Of the making of many books there is no end."
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Job and the friends who condoled with him were such great poets that their dialogue conforms to the laws of stately blank verse. In his attempt to comfort Job, Zophar twice mentioned the birds. The second of these references has its proper place here:

"But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?"

Thus questioned Zophar, and then he answered himself:

"Man knoweth not the price thereof:
Neither is it found in the land of the living,
The deep saith, It is not in me:
The sea saith, It is not with me.
It can not be gotten for gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

It can not be valued with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx or the sapphire.
Gold and glass can not equal it,
Neither shall the exchange thereof be jewels
of fine gold;
No mention shall be made of coral or of
crystal:
Yea, the price of wisdom is above rubies;
The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Whence then cometh wisdom?
And where is the place of understanding?
Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
And kept close from the fowls of the air.

Destruction and death say,
We have heard a rumor thereof with our ears.
God understandeth the way thereof,
And He knoweth the place thereof."

Isaiah was so much of a poet that his prose is liberally sprinkled with lines which naturally fall into verse. He sang several songs of praise to the Almighty, but he believed in making sinners tremble, and most of his poetry consists of Doom Songs. He sang of the Doom of Philistia, Moab, Tyre, and then of Ethiopia. Here he remembered the clouds of birds which were seen there every spring and fall, and he cried:

"Ah, the land of the rustling of wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;
Which sendeth her ambassadors by the sea,
Even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters:

STORK

ANSCHUTZ

"With healing in his wings."

'Go, ye swift messenger, to a nation tall and smooth,
To a people terrible from their beginning onward;
A nation which meteth out, and treadeth down,
Whose land the rivers divide.' "

Isaiah made several references to birds, most of them poetical and forceful in their use, that belong in other chapters. In fact, no Bible writer had quite the telling force of expression and the gift of pure oratorical style of Isaiah.

It was in describing the Doom of Moab, too, that Isaiah remembered the wailing cry and bewildered flight of a brooding bird thrown from her nest, and there was poetry in his comparison:

"For it shall be that, as a wandering bird
Cast out of her nest,
So the daughters of Moab shall be
At the fords of Arnon."

Solomon had this same pitiful picture in his mind when he wrote in his maxims:

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place."

While lamenting the miseries of Judah, Jeremiah, who came near being a Professional Wailer, shed more tears and gave voice to more regrets than any other Bible writer. He was thinking of the doves of the palms and the storks of the cedars when he cried:

"O inhabitant of Lebanon,
That makest thy nest in the cedars,
How greatly to be pitied shalt thou be
when pangs come upon thee,
The pain as of a woman in travail!"

He touched upon one of the miracles of the birds, which no man can explain, when he wrote in uplifted poetical strain:

> "I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled,
> And all the hills moved lightly.
> I beheld, and, lo, there was no man,
> And all the birds of the heavens were fled.'

Although Jeremiah was picturing a storm of wrath with which he predicted the Almighty would sweep away the homes of the wicked, he had in mind and drew color from a tumult of the elements. Especially was he thinking of a natural storm when he said, "All the birds of the heavens were fled." For he knew that long before men flee an approaching storm, the birds seek shelter. All outdoor people understand, that before we notice it the birds realize a storm is approaching, and hide from its fury. Whether from their elevation they see storm-clouds coming, whether they detect storm in air currents, or feel a change of atmosphere, we have no way of learning. We only know that when the birds grow silent and seek shelter on a cloudless summer day, we will regret it if we do not follow their example, for soon "the mountains will tremble and the hills move lightly."

Continuing his warnings as to the wrath of the Almighty, Jeremiah used another bird comparison and broke into a heroic strain of mighty appeal:

> "Behold, He shall come up as a cloud,
> And His chariots shall be as a whirlwind:
> His horses are swifter than eagles.
> Woe unto us for we are spoiled!
> O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness,
> That thou mayest be saved."

He was not thinking of the slow sailing of an eagle searching for prey, but of the homeward flight of the bird carrying food at such speed as is attained in answering the hunger or danger cry of its young. Jeremiah must have made his people tremble with this picture of war chariots of the Almighty sweeping upon them from the sky with the swift flight of a homing eagle.

This lamenting man liked to use the bird of strength in drawing forceful pictures to influence the superstitious people. They all saw eagles, that were plentiful, soaring the sky in their might, darting to prey upon the flocks; and unless expert bowmen, they were practically helpless against them. So they feared the eagles, and Jeremiah could use this illustration forcefully in his awful prediction of disaster. The eagle appears in one of his most impassioned pronunciations against Edom.

Whether Obadiah quotes Jeremiah, whether both of them quote the Almighty, or whether plagiarism had its inception even in those early days, I do not know. The eagle song of heroic strain is almost literally the same in the writings of both men. Here is one of the rare instances in which to my ears the wording of the old version is most forceful and poetical. As I do not know which truly produced the poem originally, and as I like the first four lines of Jeremiah better, and think the last three of Obadiah infinitely more poetical, I am going to take the liberty to combine the two in one great strain in which the anger scream of the eagle almost can be heard above the mountains:

"Thy terribleness hath deceived thee,
And the pride of thine heart,
O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock,

That holdest the height of the hill:
Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle,
And though thou set thy nest among the stars,
Thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."

The writers of the New Testament were straight historians and showed few signs of poetic temperament. As a rule they confined themselves to recounting incidents. Revelations remind us of the richness and color of Solomon, but the birds are not given place. Of those quoted in the compilation of the New Testament the Master Himself was the poet. He often broke into pure poetry of exalted strain, but in only two instances concerning the birds. When the scribe came to Jesus and offered to follow Him, He, in thinking of how many privations and hardships were endured by His disciples, cried:

"The foxes have holes,
The birds of the air have nests,
But the Son of Man hath not where
to lay His head."

This was said in no spirit of complaint, but merely as a warning to the man who would follow the Master that there would be no worldly profit in so doing.

The other reference to feathered creatures was made after fowl had been imported and domesticated until they were a common sight. The habit of the cock in waking the day with its lusty crow was in the mind of the Master when He said to Peter, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." Again, this time in a flight of pure poesy, when He stretched His arms toward Jerusalem, the loved city, and cried:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
How oft would I have gathered thee,
Even as a hen gathereth her chickens
under her wings,
But ye would not!"

Of all the poetic references to birds in the Bible, the one that sinks deepest in my heart and recurs oftenest to my thought is that of Malachi. He was the last writer of the Old Testament and tried to summarize his impressions, in his own words to give "the burden of the word of the Lord" in four short serious chapters. After explaining his conclusions as to the purposes and provinces of the Creator, his heart surged hot with pulsing adoration and his crowning poetic thought took form in this promise of the Almighty, which to me is unsurpassed for beauty of poetic imagery among the poets of the nations:

"But unto you that fear My name,
Shall the Sun of righteousness arise,
With healing in His wings."

BIRDS OF "ABOMINATION"

"*And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls.*"—MOSES.

WHITE HERONS SHIRAS

White heron are most beautiful in a green setting.

Chapter IV

BIRDS OF "ABOMINATION"

After Moses had led the Hebrews from that "hard bondage, wherein they were made to serve," he located them in what is now known as the Holy Land. Because they long had been accustomed to slavery and its exactions, he was compelled to make severe laws for them in this wonderful freedom, or he could not have held them together and founded a great nation with their blood. So he laid down laws for religious rites, for daily conduct, for dress, for food, and for the building of their homes and temples. It is with these "pure food" laws of Moses that this chapter is concerned.

In that part of the laws relating to the birds, the King James translation of the Bible names the eagle, ossifrage, and ospray, vulture, and kite, after his kind; the raven, the owl, night hawk, cuckoo, and hawk; the little owl, cormorant, and great owl; swan, pelican, and great eagle; stork, heron, and lapwing. The latest version makes some change in this. Beginning with the eagle, it changes the ossifrage to the gier eagle, leaves the ospray, changes the vulture and kite to the kite and falcon; leaves the raven, changes the owl to ostrich, leaves the night hawk, and changes the cuckoo to the sea mew; leaves the hawk, little owl, cormorant, great owl, and vulture, and adds the horned owl; drops the swan, leaves the pelican, changes the great eagle to the vulture, and ends with the stork,

heron, and lapwing, as does the old version. There are only three changes of any importance: that of the owl to the ostrich, of the cuckoo to the sea mew, and the omission of the swan.

The translators of the Bible seem to have had much confusion with the owl and the ostrich; and the term "ya'anah," meaning greediness, was applied in several instances to the owl where Bible students of wide research are sure the ostrich was intended.

If people cared to eat cuckoos, they might have been used as food; but as the sea mews lived on fish and carrion, there was sufficient reason why the ban should be placed on them. As for the swan, there is no probability that it was designated among the birds of abomination. Geese, ducks, and swans are older than any historical record. They are water-birds whose food is not in any way objectionable to the most fastidious palate. They always have been eaten, and when young and tender are considered great delicacies. Swans were not very plentiful, but they did exist at the time and in the land of Moses, and no doubt were among the fatted fowl served at great feasts in Bible lands, as they were in Greece and Italy at that time.

The other changes merely apply to different members of the eagle, vulture, hawk, and owl families. Undoubtedly Moses found every species of all of these unfit for food, for he was a man of fastidious taste and great learning. He has the sanction of our time, and almost all nations from the beginning. However, when this law was made it was necessary, for the mountaineers of Lebanon were eating hawks and eagles, and so were the half-wild tribes of Syria and Arabia, with which the Hebrews would come in contact.

Of these nineteen birds mentioned in the latest version of the Bible, thirteen are referred to elsewhere for other reasons, so that their history belongs in the chapter devoted to them. But the night hawk, sea mew, heron, lapwing, ospray, and vulture are mentioned only in the food laws, and only as birds of "abomination."

The Night Hawk.

Almost every Bible student and commentator has a personal opinion as to the bird here intended. The Hebrew word, "tachmas," originally means, "to tear or scratch the face." That probably would happen to one coming in contact with any captive hawk or owl, and easily might occur in the case of any of two dozen different birds. The first translators of the Bible thought this referred to a bird identical with our strix flammea, or barn owl.

To me it seems that the later version indicates the night hawk, or night jar, and as it is of this bird we think when we read of the night hawk, I shall write of it. It was in all probability a bird very similar to ours, for there were three species in the Holy Land, one almost identical with ours.

Never was there truer night hawk country than Palestine, where most of the action of the Old Testament was confined. The country is of as mountainous character as Switzerland, though the mountains are much lower. One great plain, Esdraelon, sweeps from the ocean to the river, lesser plains lie between hills and mountains; there are many small lakes connected by rivers, and wherever there was moisture, rank vegetation flourished, and spicy shrubs and waxy sweet flowers that attracted insects.

One of the rivers often mentioned by Bible writers, the Kedron, is now lying a dry bed, but in those days it was of importance, as it helped to water the plains.

To all the attractions of location almost tropical climate was added, so that earth afforded no more alluring haunt for the night hawk. There was mountain, valley, and plain hunting for food, taken on wing; perfumed air so thick with insects that they were a pest to the people, river and lake water frequent, and little shelves among the rocky mountains, and bare brown spots of plain for nesting-places, where the color of nature would so match the birds' backs as to conceal them when brooding.

Here they could deposit their eggs, so similar in color to the earth upon which they were laid, with scarcely an attempt at nest-building, that one might step upon them unaware. The brooding birds were shades of grayish white, browns, and tans, and quite as invisible as the eggs. It was the habit of these birds when brooding to remain perfectly quiet upon the nest, trusting that their likeness to the surroundings would conceal them. If danger threatened too closely, they fluttered from the nest, using the old trick of brooding birds when they pretended to have a broken wing, and hopped away as if helpless, to lure one from their location.

Since in the thousands of years intervening between now and the time when Moses placed the ban on these birds there has been no perceptible change in their looks and habits, it is quite likely that travelers of the plains and shepherds herding their flocks were familiar with this sight in the days of Moses, and even before his time.

If these birds were cornered or disturbed just as their young were emerging, they sat upon their tails, fought with beak and claws like a hawk, distended the throat

NIGHT HAWK JOB

Night hawk on her nest.

greatly, and hissed. In this position they appealed to the risibilities of some Frenchman, who applied to them the name of "Crapaud volans," flying toad. There was reason for the application of the title; it was appropriate. This calls to mind the fact that night hawk, the common name of the bird, is not suitable for them. They are more nearly related to martins and swallows than to hawks, and they may be seen flying and taking food for long periods at any hour of the day. As a rule, they take flight at three in the afternoon, always by four or five, so that they are not sufficiently creatures of night to be characterized by a title that relegates them to birds of darkness. For their size the eyes are unusually large, and they do fly and find food on wing at night. But you will learn that they settle by midnight, as a rule, if you will watch them some clear August night, when they circle in numbers over a lake. They also spend much time on wing in afternoons of late summer. They have a liking for cities, though I do not know just how to explain the attraction. Neither does any one else. But it has been observed that they have a fondness for sailing over cities, where their graceful sweeping flight is a treat to the tired eyes of those condemned to walls and heat. No doubt they swept out from the mountains, and up from the plains, and hung above Jerusalem, Bethel, and Nazareth on warm summer evenings, and were watched from the housetops by the faithful as they offered up their prayers. Almost without exception the cities of the Holy Land were placed upon high hills and the tops of mountains, so that the inhabitants could look down to the plains and valleys and be prepared for the approach of an enemy or to welcome a friend.

This also had the advantage, in clear half-tropical air, of giving to the inhabitants, who were great dwellers of the housetops, wonderful views of valleys, plains, and other cities. The marvelous color of earth and clouds, the brilliancy of foliage and flower of the plains, made pictures which we can not even imagine. The wonderful flight of the night hawk was a part of them, as it soared, circled, fell, and rose again.

All birds to which these are related are creatures of powerful flight: the night hawk in its abrupt risings and fallings as remarkable as any. Its strong plumage enables it to soar and sail, and as it takes much of its food on wing it remains in flight for hours. Its sky evolutions are marvels of grace as soaring exhibitions; and often during the brooding season, sometimes for the diversion of the weary female, as other birds give a concert, the male night hawk has a circus. He sails, soars, turns, and twists rapidly, and then mounts to a height of eighty feet or more and, extending his stiff wing-quills widespread, he falls rapidly toward the earth, the wind whistling between the feathers with such an uncanny sound that some ornithologists believe it is made with the mouth. When he nears earth he recovers his balance and mounts in as straight a flight as any bird can make; just now I can remember none that can equal him in perpendicular ascent; and after soaring a time, he makes the whistling drop again. This is a ludicrous performance to watch, but not more amusing than the nuptial dance of a blue heron, the drumming with which a partridge courts a mate, or the antics of a black vulture. It is little wonder that the ancients spent so much time on the housetops: the location was so fine for seeing marvels and wonders.

Aristotle spoke of a bird that dwells in cliffs and rocks, that was "faulty both in color and voice," and "that appears in the night, and escapes in the day," which seems to be his nearest reference to a night hawk. The matter is incorporated in his chapter on "Hawks," which makes the theory more conclusive. Pliny merely mentions a hawk "that preyeth in the night."

Just why the bird was placed on the list of abominations to the taste, may be accounted for in several ways. The prohibition seems unnecessary, for the methods of taking birds in the days of Moses would have made it impossible to capture sufficient numbers of this bird of seclusion and flight to serve as a staple of food. Possibly its meat had a strong flavor. Probably its early and continuous flight soon made it have tough, strong muscles. And again, in a land "of milk, wine, and honey," where a traveler need make no provision for a long journey, but might feast as he chose by the wayside, there were so many more attractive things to eat that Moses objected to his people using anything for food with a hawklike appearance: for all hawk flesh was barred for food, and the provision, "after his kind," included the night hawks as well as the great birds of day.

The Sea Mew.

The bird which the most recent translators of the Bible have decided is the sea mew, was thought by their predecessors to have been the cuckoo, although they admitted the uncertainty of the basis on which they made the claim. They suggested in notes that some sort of gull or shearwater might have been intended by the Hebrew root "shachapah," which means to be "lean and slender."

The birds of both versions occurred in Bible days and lands, but the cuckoo was not sufficiently common to make it a staple of food. There was no good reason why it should not have been eaten if people had chosen. Its plucked body was small, though not half so small as sparrows, which were an article of food on sale in the markets. But then, the sparrows were all the year residents, so numerous that they could be trapped and netted by the hundred; cuckoos were never plentiful, and they were migratory.

Sea mews were to be found in great flocks all along the east coast of the Mediterranean, and inland around the Sea of Galilee and larger lakes. They were birds of size to make them worth consideration for food, and sufficiently numerous to have formed a staple of diet. There were two great objections to them.

They lived on fish, which ruins the flesh of any bird for food, making it strong and rank. They added to that a few insects and eggs of other birds around the shore, but they also ate with avidity every scrap of carrion to be found, which gave force to the veto against them as an article of food. Gulls are not now, and in all probability never were, acceptable even to the palate which endured the hawk and eagle.

It is said of them that they have more intelligence than the average bird, and share with the raven and some species of eagles and hawks the knowledge that if they find any mollusk the shell of which they can not penetrate, they can carry it aloft and drop it on the rocks to break it open. It takes a very wise bird to learn this. Most feathered creatures would pick at a shell a few times, and, finding it unyielding, seek food elsewhere.

The gulls breed around the shores where they fish, and

SEA MEW JOB

The sea mew on wing.

are wonderful water birds of powerful flight. They take long trips in migration, and remain on wing no one knows how much of their time. They swim well, and when tired of flight can sail on the surface, rest their wings, and even sleep afloat, as ducks and swans. They drop from air and plunge beneath the surface for fish and seafoods they see, and face a storm on wing as almost no other bird. They circle and tack, and are seen to fly directly into the face of heavy winds. If they do not delight in a tumult, they deceive men into thinking so by remaining among the raging elements when shelter could be sought were not the storm preferred.

They did this in the days of Moses and long before his time, just as now. It was noted, commented upon, and superstition, as always, was ready with an explanation. Because these birds seemed restless, ever on wing, flying over the stormy seas and rough lakes when it appeared as if they must be driven against their will, the Moslems believed them to be tenanted by the souls of the damned. I am quite sure Moses did not think that of any bird, unless he believed that it was used as an instrument to convince doubting souls; but it must be remembered that his early life was spent among the idolators of the Egyptian court, and he was familiar with the traditions of all known history. He would have been more than human if his life never had been in the least tinged by his early surroundings.

Stanch believer that Moses was, I am sure no man reared in Egypt ever killed a gull, an ibis, a lapwing, or a cat. The birds and animals connected with idolatry, superstition, or believed to be of good or bad omen by oracles and augurs, were left very severely alone. If any

man thought there was a slight possibility of interfering with a soul in torment by killing a gull, you may be sure he did not molest the bird, least of all eat it. This superstition may have had some influence in deciding Moses to place the ban on the sea mew, and leave it free to breast the stormy winds of the Mediterranean and live out its life in peace around rough little Galilee.

The Heron.

Some of the oldest residents of the lakes and running water of the Holy Land were the blue, white, brown, and buff-backed herons, the latter really an ibis; seven members of the family in all. The herons, which summered in Europe, crossed the Mediterranean and sought the waters of Lake Merom and the river Jordan in winter. Simultaneously with their northern flight the same birds of Central Africa made their migration and took their places, so that they were to be seen constantly in the Holy Land. Their range is world-wide, and species differ but little in frame, color, and habit.

They fished and nested the length of the Jordan, where it crossed the plains at Esdraelon and formed low, marshy beds; and followed its tributaries, where frogging was good. Midway between Galilee and the Dead Sea, the Jabbok, a little river especially loved by water-fowl, entered the Jordan. It came into the sacred river in a narrow channel between high, rocky walls, but toward its head waters it was a small marshy stream in places, its bed almost dry excepting when, during the winter rains, the floods from the high hills and mountains entered it. But throughout the summer season, when the herons of Africa were nesting there, this river was almost dry, and its bed

BLUE HERON STRATTON-PORTER

The blue heron among water grasses.

furnished the kind of feeding-ground loved by them, so that they made long flights there food-hunting, even when they nested elsewhere. It is quite possible that the herons of earliest morning, hunting along this river, may have witnessed the conclusion of the scene when Jacob wrestled with the angel, for it happened one night on the banks of the Jabbok in the land of Ammon.

But the most loved spot of the Holy Land, and the one around which herons congregated at all seasons, was Merom. This little lake was only six miles long and four miles broad. The Jordan entered it at the north, and left at the south, passing through Galilee and emptying into the Dead Sea. The shores of the lake had spots of impenetrable marsh, where through thickets grew masses of bulrushes and sweet water-grasses, among which frogs pursued sweet-loving insects, and the herons pursued the frogs. It is the habit of these birds to nest in colonies in tall trees; but where hunting was so good as at Merom, they raised their young among the papyrus, reeds, and water-grasses of the swamps.

When the winter rainy season had passed, and the Jordan and its tributaries lowered to their natural channels; when spring bloom of wild trees, fruit trees, and spice bushes perfumed the clear air with almost sickening sweetness, the herons gathered near Merom, nested in the marshes, and hunted around the margin of the lake. They were so nearly the same birds that we see in similar locations to-day that a picture of any one of our blue herons busy with its great industry, frogging, will serve as a likeness for them. The white herons were small, the blue a little larger, and the brown nearly the same size. A pure white bird is always beautiful, and when it makes its way

among the rank growth of an almost tropical lake, the green setting gives it especial beauty.

The blue bird reached a height of three and one-half feet, with a wing sweep of five feet. The neck, beak, and legs constituted two-thirds of their length, the body the remainder. This life among the rushes has had a peculiar effect on these birds. From ages of wading between rush stems and food-hunting in water their legs have grown longer and longer, their necks have stretched and stretched, and their bills have elongated also, until they present an unusually snaky appearance as they come slipping between the rushes. They are fine illustrations of what can be done in the way of evolution by development along one line. If herons swam the surface and scooped food from shallow muck as do ducks, or scratched in earth and picked up worms as do chickens, equally as much as they wade water and thread rushes for food, they would have a different shape. Ages of wading between rushes and hunting food among roots keeps them increasing length of leg and neck until at a casual glance leg and neck seem to be almost all there is of them.

Human beings can do the same thing. If for six generations a man scarcely uses his left arm and wields a blacksmith's hammer with his right, the seventh will produce a man with an abnormal right arm. It is upon exactly this principle that different forms in nature have been evolved. The duck swims the surface, so she has such a complete boat of a body that she tucks her head under her wing and the wind blows her across the surface of a lake as she sleeps. She scoops her food from the shallow muck so her beak has widened into a shovel. She uses her feet in swimming so the muscles between her toes have

stretched until they have formed a web which makes her a paddle.

The bodies of other birds have evolved according to the food they hunt and the location of their nests. In its environment the heron has become almost the slimmest bird there is, and it is probably due to this fact that Moses legislated against it in his pure-food laws. It carried practically no flesh. It was mostly bone and muscle, and even in youth the little flesh it had was of blue color and tough with muscle fiber. I doubt seriously if a plucked heron three and a half feet tall will weigh much over two pounds. I never had one shot to learn, because there is no fact concerning any bird that I want to know badly enough to kill the bird. But it is difficult to find a reason for placing the herons among the birds of abomination, unless it is that there was nothing of them to eat. I think the reason Moses barred herons was because he did not like their flavor. Undoubtedly their steady diet of fish and frogs gave to what flesh they had an offensively fishy odor. Whether it did or not, the fact remains that there would be little more than a pound of meat to be gotten by scraping the entire frame of a heron, and there were so many other birds of tender, white meat that could be eaten, that the heron went on the abomination list. But I am told by T. Gilbert Pearson, the warden of the Audubon bird preserves on the shores of the Carolinas and Florida, that herons are killed for food by the poor classes of those States in our own country. People must be very poor, indeed, when they resort to the food to be found on the legs, wings, and back of a heron, and I doubt if the breast is either thick or inviting meat. Again, Moses might have hesitated over using the heron

for food because it was too near a relative of the ibis, which was religiously sacred in Egypt.

The herons are very artistic birds on the landscape. It is a shame to kill them. The blue heron is my favorite in flight, and the white among the rushes. The blue herons have a white head and neck, with a black crest and throat line, dull blue-gray back, wing, and tail feathers, mixed with black and white touches and hints of brown, and a long white beard on the breast. I love to see them trailing across the sky, with the long neck shot forward, the slender legs trailing behind, and the wide wings beating slowly. They do not fly at great height when changing from lake to river in food-hunting, and they frequently utter a rasping "Ker-awk! Ker-awk!" on wing, no doubt to locate their mates. If a heron in flight passes between you and the sun, in such a manner that its shadow flashes across the grass, you have small sense of humor if you do not get a good laugh from the spectacle. It is the most amusing sight.

Bible herons nested in colonies in the tall cedars and fir trees where they were to be found, and built a rough nest of coarse sticks and twigs. Their eggs were from four to five in number and of pale-blue color. The young remained in the nest until well grown, and were cared for attentively by their parents. Baby herons were the same amusing spectacles before they were able to fly and fully feathered that they are now.

Aristotle knew three herons: the black, the white, and a kind called "asterias." Of these he pronounced the black an "ingenious bird;" but he said "its color, however, is bad, and its stomach always fluid." He recorded that the white heron is "beautiful, and it tends its young care-

fully in trees." Of heron characteristics he said, "It attacks creatures which injure it, as the eagle, for it seizes upon it, and the fox, for this creature attacks it during the night, and the lark, which steals its eggs." These larks, which stole heron eggs, are mentioned by no other writer with whose work I am familiar, so I think this must be a large mistake.

Pliny wrote that the black heron, "called pellon, mates with much pain and difficulty; as for the males, verily they cry again for anguish, and the blood starts out of their eyes. And with as much ado and trouble do the females lay." Aristotle had the same idea. I never heard of this from any other source, and I doubt if the act of mating is painful to any bird. But I know that females suffer to a greater or less degree in depositing their eggs, and that the joy manifested by some of them when the act is accomplished is an expression of relief. This is particularly noticeable in the cow bird and domestic fowl. It seems to be a feeling similar to those paroxysms of sobbing laughter which come to a human mother when her child is safely delivered to her.

Herons are beautiful birds, whether food-hunting or in flight, and do no harm in any way of which I can think, so they should be protected rigorously. They are among the oldest birds of history, and though they may be an "abomination" to the hungry, they are a treat to the soul of a lover of nature, as they wing their deliberate flight across country from lake to river.

The Lapwing.

The lapwing of the Bible was called the hoopoe in Southern Europe and England, from its cry, which re-

sembled this word when it is properly intoned, and this translation was correct. We know the bird only in parks, where its great beauty wins it many admirers. It is the size of our brown thrush, and wears a gorgeous flaring crest of broad, graduated feathers of pale yellow, banded near the point with white, and tipped with black. Its beak is very long, gracefully curved, and sharp. The head and neck are a warm golden buff color, which extends over the breast in slightly lighter shade. The back is a cinnamon color, and the wings and tail are buff, banded which black and white. A wide circular band of white arches across the tail near the middle, and the wings are crossed by four or five of these white bands. The folded crest lies back like that of a kingfisher, but it is longer and heavier; the feathers, being of unequal length, cross it with lines of black and white.

Pliny gave this description of the bird: "The Houpe, or Vpupa (as Æschillus the Poet saith), changeth also her hue, voice, and shape. This is a nasty and filthy bird otherwise, both in the manner of feeding, and also in nesting; but a goodly fair crest or comb it hath, that will easily fold and be plaited: for one while she will draw it in, another while set it stiff upright along the head."

I think this is surely the bird mentioned by Burns in Afton Water, though he says, "green-crested." But possibly he saw it in strong sunlight, and the black of the crest had that peculiar irridescent-green of the neck of a blackbird, and so much other black feathering. It must have been uttering the hoopoe cry full force, for the poet admonished it:

"Thou green-crested Lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair."

LAPWING CARR

"The Arabs call this the "Doctor Bird."

The original home of the bird was Southern Asia or Africa. They were numerous in Palestine, but spread over Europe in migration. They were plentiful in Egypt, where they remained all the time; while they were only summer residents of Palestine. The Arabs believed they had power to cure sickness, and called them "the doctor bird." They used lapwing heads in compounding many charms. These superstitious people thought, from a peculiar habit of these birds in placing their bills on the ground and raising and lowering their crests, that they could detect water and thus indicate the spot upon which to dig wells. They also taught that the lapwings could hear you when you whispered, and reveal your secrets. On account of these beliefs the Egyptians almost worshiped the birds. Moses expressly stated that the reason he placed the ban on any fowl was because it was an "abomination" for food; but I think he must have been influenced to some degree in the case of the lapwing, in particular, by his early years of Egyptian training. The Greeks and Romans also had many strange superstitions and peculiar traditions concerning these birds. On account of their great beauty they had small chance for life when they crossed the sea, and a bullet still greets their every appearance in unfamiliar places. Scientists think they would breed in England if they had the slightest encouragement.

All accounts of their nesting habits are extremely discouraging. There can be no question why Moses, who studied all these points, put a ban upon the lapwing for food. It ate such filth as to be indescribable. It seems that a starving person could not watch one eat, and then use it for his own food. One great scientist says of it:

"All observers agree in stating that it delights to find its food among filth of the most abominable description."

Then lapwings nested in a hole in a wall or in a hollow tree, and again their habits were most repulsive. The female brooded closely, and the male fed her and the young. The fæces were not removed by the old, as was the case almost universally with birds, and soon the nest and the region around it became unbearable to mortals. One would think these birds would have taken such pride in their dainty variegated plumage that they would have become neater housekeepers, even if they had no particular sense of smell. In a country so warm as Palestine the situation near a nest could be imagined easily.

So this is another of the birds forbidden the Hebrews for food by Moses. Small wonder! And yet it was one of the birds of his list concerning which some other nations thought he made a mistake. On a diet of grubs, worms, and insects in Northern and Middle Europe, after nesting cares were over, the lapwing grew very fat; and on the way back to Africa they were much killed in Southern Europe for food, and were considered the height of delicate bird morsels. The Christians of Constantinople especially prized them. There is to say for these people that they were unfamiliar for the most part with the bird's breeding habits. Without personal acquaintance with the hoopoe, I agree with Moses.

The lapwing is still frequent in Palestine. It nests in the hollow trees of Judea and Galilee, in clefts of the rocks and holes in the walls; it drinks from the Jordan, and utters its "hoopoe" cry all over the very land with which the Savior was most familiar. The ancient Mosaic law against using it for food still prevails.

YOUNG LAPWINGS CARR

A nestful of young "Doctors."

The Ospray.

"Asinyeh," which our translators of the new version of the Bible render ospray, seems to have come nearest one of the small eagles. Our ospray is a fish-eating bird, but fish were found only in a few places in the Holy Land, so that the greatest authorities on Bible history think the bird was a species of short-toed eagle nearly two feet in height, which was common in Palestine and so closely resembled the ospray that a scientist would have been required to tell them apart. This is very probably true.

This bird fed on serpents, lizards, and frogs, and its feet were covered with a thick, scaly armor, that protected it from bites. The back was dark brown, the under parts white with dark, half-moon shaped markings. It had a flat head and big yellow eyes, and was a very impressive figure on the landscape.

Whether it was this eagle or the true ospray that soared and hunted over Palestine was a question difficult to decide, and one which makes small difference, since they were so similar. It was of the true ospray of which Pliny made a delightful observation, based on the wonderful power of vision of all birds of these families:

"Now, as touching the Haliartos, or the ospray, she only before her little ones be feathered will beat and strike them with her wings, and thereby force them to look full against the sunbeams: now if she see any one of them to wink, or their eyes to water at the rays of the sun, she turns it with the head forward out of the nest, as a bastard and not right, and none of hers, but bringeth up and cherisheth that whose whole eye will abide the light of the sun, as she looks directly upon him."

It was for the same reason that all eagles, hawks, vultures, and owls were prohibited for food that the ospray went upon the list of abominations.

The Cormorant.

In the new version of the Bible the cormorant is only mentioned among the birds of "abomination." The reference in Isaiah in the old version, which reads "cormorant and bittern," being changed in the new to the pelican and porcupine.

The change from the cormorant to the pelican makes very little difference. The birds are close relatives, and their cries and habits are quite similar, so that either would suit the requirements of the text equally well. But to change the bittern to the porcupine, as will be explained in the Bittern chapter, is undoubtedly a great mistake. Here the old version is correct by every law of natural history.

All along the shores of the Mediterranean where it bounded the Bible lands, around the inland seas, and the largest rivers, the cormorants lived in flocks, and rarely was a pair seen singly. They liked the rocky shores of the Dead Sea, Galilee, and the banks of the Jordan made splendid fishing-grounds. They were near the size of small geese, but longer in body, with a shorter, thicker neck. Their bill was almost as long as a pelican's, greenish at the tip, deep yellow at the base and around the eyes, and had a sharp-curved tip above.

The plumage was black over the neck and back, with greenish reflections, and very dark blackish gray underneath. They hobbled around the shores with bare webbed feet like geese, but were not nearly such good walkers,

OSPRAY SHIRAS

Ospray approaching nest.

even at times seeming to depend upon the stiff tail-feathers for support. Their wings were long and pointed. They were able to swim under the water to far outdistance the swiftest boatman.

Around the seacoasts they nested in rocky cliffs, and by the rivers in the largest trees, building big, deep nests of dry rushes, water-grasses, reeds, and roots. Our birds which most resemble them in appearance lay four small, bluish eggs for the size of the birds. The young are slow about leaving the nest, and only two broods are raised to a season.

Great quantities of small fish were carried to a nest of young each day, and the old birds, when free from brooding cares, were known to eat a dozen and a half good-sized fish in the same length of time. These Bible cormorants lived mostly on fish, but they were seen to eat young ducks, herons, and other water birds. Moses pronounced against them as an article of food, and their diet sounds as if he were in the right. But they extend almost to polar regions with us, and our Laplanders think them good to eat. There is a possibility that the fish of Arctic waters do not taste so rank and strong as those in the tropics, and the flesh of a fish-eating bird there may not be so strongly flavored.

It was their harsh, rough cry that led translators to place them among the birds used to intimidate people in depicting scenes of desolation, and in this way they became confused with the pelicans. Then, too, their practice of regurgitating the fish they eat is so similar to pelicans (which derive their names from this habit) that translators were puzzled as to which bird was intended.

The Chinese use their cormorants commercially. They

carefully gather freshly laid eggs, place them under brooding hens, and raise the young by hand, making them very tame. When the birds understand what is wanted of them, and become experts, they are taken on rafts over good fishing grounds and set to work. A well-trained bird will bring up great numbers of fish in a day, and when two or three work on one raft they become very valuable to their owners.

On account of their large size, no doubt, they were a temptation to people who wanted bird-meat for food. It is probable that Moses placed the ban on them on account of their diet, as he did most of the other birds of abomination.

The Vulture.

The new version of the Bible only mentions the vulture among the birds of abomination. In the former translations, when Isaiah predicted how the Almighty would avenge His Church, he said, "There shall the vultures be gathered, every one with her mate." The revision makes this read "kites" instead of vultures. When we think of a vulture we mean one of our three species of large carrion eaters, most commonly the black vulture of the South. They are our nearest bird to those that were named "Pharaoh's chickens." This was done on account of the fact that in warm Egyptian country they were so prized for their work as scavengers by the residents of walled cities, villages, and tents of the desert that one of the Pharaohs made a law providing for the infliction of the death penalty on any one killing a vulture.

This stringency of law for the protection of birds in olden times was not confined to Egypt alone. The stork

CORMORANT JOB

Cormorant rising for flight.

was guarded by a death penalty in Thessaly because of its efficient work in killing serpents. Both Athens and Rome had superstitious reverence for any bird building on a temple of worship. They thought the bird claimed the care of the gods, and so they protected it. Pliny gives all the details of the murder, by an enraged mob, of a shoemaker who killed a raven that was hatched on a temple. The ibis was sacred in Egypt. Birds considered good omens and augurs were safeguarded by law, and the superstitious people were afraid of those of evil omen.

There is no connection in our minds between the vulture and the kite. With us the kite most resembles a great hawk or eagle, and its diet of rats, mice, moles, and young birds removes it from our conception of the vulture, which for the most part watches for the dead, and feasts on carrion. It is small difference to us which of these birds occupy a place in Isaiah's prophecy of desolation. But I very much dislike the other changes which relegate the vulture to the birds of abomination.

All my life I have found peculiar satisfaction in the lines recorded by Job where Zophar describes a mine for silver in the depths of the earth, with scarce a path leading to it, and a perfectly concealed entrance. Zophar said, in speaking of this way to the silver mine, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." The revision changes this to—

> "That path no bird of prey knoweth,
> Neither hath the falcon's eye seen it."

I should have liked it if these lines had been made to read:

> "There is a path which no bird near earth knoweth,
> And which the vulture's eye hath not seen."

That would have made good natural history accord with the idea of the speaker. There is a way so skillfully concealed, because it leads to a mine where men find riches, that none of the small birds living near the ground know that it is there, and none of the great hunters of earth from the high places have seen it. Of the searchers for food from among the clouds, the vulture, hawk, and eagle stand pre-eminent. Any of these would suit the idea of Zophar very well. No one has decided or can decide with absolute certainty which of these birds can see the farthest. They have ranged the heavens since the beginning of the keeping of records, and strained their eyes searching for food. No doubt their vision is equally acute.

Just to look at an eagle, the color in his eye, and the force in his whole face, give the impression of great power of penetration. But I have had much experience with vultures, and I find they are deceptive in appearance. With their low-hung head and humping walk they appear to be sneaking creatures of earth. I know them to be unsurpassed rangers of the heavens. I have tested their sight by laying a piece of meat of two or three pounds' weight on a stump under a cloudless sky, where I could see no sign of any bird, and in a few minutes five vultures dropped from without my range of vision and began fighting over the meat.

I have seen them locate and go to carrion which eagles might have had as well if they had seen it. I have watched a vulture on earth as it turned its head on one side and sent an eye scanning the heavens, when I was sure it saw its mate where I could not distinguish anything; and I looked with eyes trained from infancy to see far and accurately. I have marked on the face of a vulture, when

VULTURE

STRATTON-PORTER

"They shall not be eaten. They are an abomination."

it came very close where I worked around its nest, such a look as I never saw on the face of any other bird. The age of China, the sorcery of Egypt, and the cunning of Arabia were combined in it.

It appeared to say: "The Almighty, before whose marvels you stand mute, made me. I have my place in the divine plan, and my purpose to serve. All nations have protected me." Then it seemed to fling the challenge, "Darest thou molest me?" And I stood trembling before the look in the eye of the black vulture, and confessed to my soul that I did not dare. The home of any bird and its young should be sacred to every one.

No bird can be traced to more remote antiquity than the vulture. It is mentioned far back as written records extend. Previous to that time it was used in hieroglyphics chiseled over monument, obelisk, and pyramid.

Herodotus said, "The vultures came from another part of the earth, which is invisible to us." This means that they were migratory, and crossed the Mediterranean from Africa. Aristotle advanced a step, and said: "Difficult as it is to observe them, their nests have been seen. The vulture builds in inaccessible rocks, wherefore its nest and young ones are rarely seen."

Pliny had this to say of them: "The black vultures are the best of that kind. No man ever could meet with their nests: whereupon some have thought, but untruly, that they fly unto us out of another world, even from the Antipodes, who are opposite unto us. But the very truth is, they build in the highest rocks they can find, and their young have many times been seen, two together, and no more."

The vultures we know and of which we think when we read of these birds are the great condors, that are a western coast bird, and our largest species; the next smaller, the red buzzard; and the smallest, our black vulture, having a body the size of a medium turkey and between four and five-foot wing sweep.

Bible people knew as their largest species the great lammer-geier, which fed on the bones and carcasses abandoned by other birds and animals. For so minutely has the Almighty planned the scheme of creation and the progress of evolution that when the smaller vultures had eaten every shred of carrion from a carcass, the lammergeiers were waiting to tear up the skeleton and drop the bones upon the rocks from great heights, to get the marrow, which was the greatest delicacy. Thus a dead animal was obliterated. The geiers were also fond of the tortoise, which they carried aloft and dropped upon stones to break the shell. Pliny described the death of the poet Æschylus, that he said was caused by this habit of the geier, which he confused with members of the eagle family, and of which he wrote: "Subtle she is and witty: for when she has seized upon tortoises, and caught them up with her talons, she throweth them down from aloft to break their shells. And it was the fortune of the poet Æschylus to die by such means. For when he was foretold by wizards out of their learning, that it was his destiny to die on such a day by something falling on his head: he thinking to prevent that, got him forth that day into a great open plain, far from house or tree, presuming upon the security of the clear and open sky. Howbeit, an eagle let fall a tortoise, which light on his head, dashed out his brains, and laid him asleep forever."

YOUNG VULTURE STRATTON-PORTER

A little "Pharaoh's Chicken."

The bird undoubtedly was the greatest of the vulture family, so closely resembling an eagle in flight that at the height from which it dropped the tortoise those present could not say accurately which bird it was. At any rate, it was the geiers that followed the practice by which the poet is said to have met a death without a parallel in history.

Vultures were common all over Bible lands. These locations formed their best territory. A great variety of carcasses were left over the mountains and in the wildernesses by beasts and birds preying upon each other. Along the coast and around the lakes the vultures flocked over the haunts of the pelican and ate putrid fish dropped between nests. Across the desert they followed caravans, picking up refuse. Among the tents of the shepherds they caught up the offal from dressed meat and fowl. In cities they were found wherever a scrap of food was thrown away. To the very altar they went to eat the entrails from the prepared sacrifices of cattle, lambs, goats, and birds.

They paired with much affectionate courting, and built in crevices in walls, cliffs, hollow trees that had been felled for commerce and found worthless, and in just such places as they nest to-day. They laid two eggs, and because the young remained over two months in the nest they raised only one pair to the season. The young were covered with snowy-white down, then half down and black feathers, and finally became black as their parents.

On account of their diet the region near nests is unbearable. These birds must have small sense of smell, or they could not live with themselves. They have a habit of lifting the wings and sitting in the sun, which appears

as if they might be trying to air themselves. It is not on record that the most daring ornithologist ever was able to eat of their flesh, though several have tried. The reason Moses placed them among the abominations is obvious, for they were the very worst of his whole list as an article of food.

THE DOVE

"O, that I had wings like a dove!
For then I would fly away and be at rest."

—David.

BROODING DOVE STRATTON-PORTER

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Chapter V

THE DOVE

According to our translations, the dove is mentioned more frequently than any other bird of the Bible, and always in a way to indicate that its habits and characteristics were the same then as to-day. It was written of first by Moses, when he recorded the receding of the waters of the great flood. He described how Noah, after his trial with the raven, sent out a dove. In all probability he chose the raven because it was big, strong, and such a knowing bird. Then he sent a dove. She could find no perching-place, and the roof of the ark occupied by the raven did not attract her, so she re-entered the ark and joined her mate. Noah waited seven days and sent her again, and when she returned he could see signs that she had been eating green leaves. No doubt she was crazed for fresh food after the confinement of the ark, and gorged to repletion, for the tender, gentle dove always has been a great glutton.

However, it does not carry food in its bill, but eats a crop full, and then regurgitates a portion to its mate and young. This undoubtedly is what the watching Noah saw, that the returning dove had a full crop, and divided with her mate, as is the habit of doves. Then he knew that she had found green food, and soon all the birds and animals could be released. The choice of the dove to send on this mission appeals to me as wiser than

that of the raven. No other bird of history that is capable of the length of sustained flight of the dove has its tender love for its mate and would return to it with such surety. David was thinking of this wonderful power of flight in these birds when he cried:

> "O, that I had wings like a dove!
> For then I would fly away and be at rest."

One of our greatest authorities on birds says: "No sharp distinction can be drawn between pigeons and doves. No one species can be pointed out to which the word dove, taken alone, seems to be absolutely proper." Yet the next Biblical reference to doves proves that at the time Moses compiled the Hebraic law the distinction between a dove and a pigeon was sharply drawn in law and by the people. Pigeons even then were half-domesticated, the timid doves remained wild.

In Genesis, Moses described the scene wherein God strove to strengthen the faith of Abram when he asked of the Lord how he was to know of his inheritance. The command was, "Take me an heifer of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." This indicates that the species were separated a thousand years before the time of even the crudest attempt at ornithological records.

There were three doves of separate families and habits which Moses knew. The palm turtle, which was not so very numerous, took its name from its love of nesting in palm trees, sometimes to the extent of a colony of a half dozen families to the tree. Often it was seen in the gardens near Jerusalem and around Jericho. Where the palm did not grow it nested in flocks in the thorn trees.

It is supposed to be the bird that was most often used for sacrifice in the wilderness, where it easily could be procured. It was a small dove, only ten inches in length, with a strong chestnut color, long tail, and bright irridescent feathers around the neck, that took on a beautiful sheen in sunlight.

The collared turtle-dove was the largest, and wintered in the trees on the shores of the Dead Sea, in summer spreading through the woods of Tabor, the forests of Gilead, and following up the rocky gorges of the Jordan. It was three inches longer than the palm dove, and was of plump, full body. It had rich, creamy plumage, a collar or ruff of black feathers around the neck, and was of especially sweet and plaintive voice, so that its species were caged for pets and given much loving care by the women. There is a dove of this family now imported for this purpose, but it is smaller and darker of color.

There is no doubt in my mind but it is this bird to which David referred when, in an exhortation to praise God, he quoted what is now thought to be a snatch of an old triumph song, which mentioned "the wings of a dove covered with silver and her pinions with yellow gold." I can see just how the comparison was made. In that strong, tropical light the rich, creamy feathers of the bird would throw flashes of gold, and when she spread her wings the hidden lighter color would show, and in beating the air would give off silvery gleams.

Turtle-doves were the commonest of all, and abounded in Palestine as in no other country in the world. In the winter they went south, but by the middle of April they were on every tree, in every thicket, over the fields along the Jordan—the sure harbinger of spring. Jeremiah said,

"The turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming." In his beautiful Spring Song Solomon wrote, "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Bushes, trees, and clefts in the rocky gorges furnished them nesting sites, and they fed to gluttony upon grain, the seeds of numberless wild plants, and every variety of clover leaf, of which they are fond when it is young and tender.

Most of Pliny's dove history is true to-day, but some of it is peculiar. He was of the opinion that as soon as the eggs hatch, the old birds filled the crops of the young with "salt and brackish earth, to prepare the appetite and season the stomach." He also noted that doves did not lift their heads in drinking, but "took a large draught at once, as horses and kine do." He said that "stock doves lived to be from thirty to forty years of age: in which time they find no infirmity or discommodity at all but only this: that their claws be overgrown, which is a sign of their age." He quoted Theophrastus as saying that doves, peacocks, and ravens were imported into Afia. Pliny recorded of his own observation, "Into the parts about Volaterræ, there is not a year but one shall see a world of stock doves flying from beyond the sea."

All doves have much the same voice and mournful cry. No other bird-note makes so deep an appeal to the sympathy of every heart. It is such a sad, sobbing note that these birds are universally spoken of as "mourning doves" by the common people.

Isaiah wrote, "I did mourn as a dove:" and again, "We roar all like bears and mourn like doves."

Nahum, in writing of the victorious armies of God

DOVE'S NEST STRATTON-PORTER

"The time of the singing of birds is come."

against Nineveh, said, "And Huzzab shall be led away captive, and she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves tabering upon their breasts." Ezekiel, in prophesying the final desolation of Israel, prayed, "But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity."

There are four notes in the mourning song; the first like the sucking breath of a child trying to suppress sobs, followed by three long-drawn tremulous notes that seem especially designed to harrow the human sympathies. They catch you in the heart. "A'gh, coo, coo, coo!" The first note is almost impossible of human reproduction, the other three are easy enough. But it appeals to me that the prophet should have said, "My mourning sounds as a dove," because the truth is that when dove-notes grow simply heart-rending in their wavering appeal, if you are where you can see the birds you will find that they are caressing each other in an abandon of pure joy, and their so-called "mourning" cry is the voice of their mating ecstasy.

The ancient Persian poet Attar realized this when he called the wailing cry of the dove "sham sorrow" in his "Bird Parliament:"

> "Then from a wood was heard unseen to coo,
> The Ring Dove—'Yusuf! Yusuf! Yusuf! Yu—'
> (For thus her sorrow broke her Note in twain,
> And just where broken took it up again)
> '—suf! Yusuf! Yusuf! Yusuf!'—But one Note,
> Which still repeating, she made hoarse her throat:
> Till chekt—'O You, who with your idle Sighs
> Block up the road of better Enterprise;

Sham Sorrow all, or bad as sham if true,
When once the better thing is come to do.' ''

Doves and pigeons were the most common and best loved of all birds of Bible lands. They were so numerous that the very poor, who could not afford the usual custom of building cotes for the pigeons, made places in their homes, and wandering tribes could secure all they wanted in wild state. They were the chosen bird for sacrifice along with the best of the flocks, because people were required to part with things for which they cared. An owl, hawk, or raven would not have constituted a sacrifice. These birds were considered nuisances that every one would have been glad to destroy.

In almost all cases where doves are specified for sacrifice it is stated that a "young" bird should be used. This might have been for three reasons. The offering should be young and tender to represent innocence and purity. It might have been that not always old birds could be trapped or netted when wanted, but that the species were so common that the young could be taken from the nest at any time. Again, the law of Moses especially stipulated that a brooding bird should not be disturbed, in order that it might continue reproduction. At any rate, young birds only were used for sacrifice. In the case of the birth of Jesus, Luke recorded that according to the law of Moses, Mary went up to Jerusalem "to offer a sacrifice to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons." Moses specified that in certain cases, if a woman "be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons." It is probable that the specifi-

cation of doves or pigeons was made because, while the doves migrated, the pigeons remained all the year; so that if doves, which seem to have been slightly preferred, as they were always mentioned first, could not be had, pigeons were at hand in abundance.

Doves were netted, snared, and sold for food and sacrifice as well as for pets. They were articles of commerce, for Matthew wrote that "Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that bought and sold in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves." This statement of Matthew was confirmed by Luke and John, and the act was directly in keeping with what Christ would have done.

Hosea referred to the timidity of these birds in case of attack, and the fact that they showed no disposition to defend themselves when he spoke of a "silly dove, without heart." Again, when he described the ingratitude of Israel to God, he said, "They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria." While instructing the apostles, Christ had thought of the harmless, lovable character of these birds when He cautioned His chosen teachers, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Jeremiah commanded the inhabitants of Moab to imitate the characteristics of doves; that is, be innocent, harmless, and trust in the providence of the Lord.

> "O ye inhabitants of Moab, leave the cities,
> And dwell in the rock;
> And be like the dove that maketh her nest
> In the sides of the hole's mouth."

David used the term "turtle-dove" to represent the people of God when he implored:

"O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove
unto the wild beast:
Forget not the life of thy poor forever."

To Isaiah was given the most beautiful thought of all, for it was he who, in discussing the glory of the Church in the great accession of the Gentiles, asked, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?"

The perfect and exquisite beauty of this thought of Isaiah's was pulsing hot in the heart of gentle Elizabeth Barrett when she penned to Robert Browning the most exquisite love-letter by a woman ever made public, in which is this line, "Like as doves to their windows, so do my thoughts fly to thee." No wonder, after he had known the fullness of her love and she had gone out, a beautiful soul, straight to the windows of her heavenly home, that he walked the floor, distraught, crying, "I want her! O, I want her!" I doubt if man has known greater and holier love than hers.

After being recorded in history, and made the basis of these beautiful comparisons, the dove was embalmed in song. Solomon repeatedly sang of it in those exquisite songs in which he and David set the world an example it has failed to follow. In one sentence, which sinks so deep into the heart it remains a lifetime, they put more pure imagery, more poetic thought, and more subtle comparison than our poets encompass on many pages:

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of
the rock,
In the covert of the steep place,

YOUNG DOVES STRATTON-PORTER

The sacrifice offered by Mary at the birth of Jesus.

Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice,
And thy countenance is comely."

These lines celebrate Divine care of the Church and are based on the knowledge of the rock dove. Again, in referring to Christ's awakening of His people:

I was asleep, but my heart waked;
It is the voice of my Beloved, that knocketh,
saying,
'Open to Me,
My sister, my love,
My dove, my undefiled:
For My head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.'"

He used the dove again in describing the person of Christ with poetic imagery:

"His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks;
Washed with milk, and fitly set."

In singing the graces of the Church:

"My dove, my undefiled, is but one;
She is the only one of her mother;
She is the pure one of her that bare her."

He made the Bridegroom to chant:

"Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair,
Thine eyes are as doves."

And again:

"Thine eyes are as doves, behind thy veil."

It would seem that all these tributes and comparisons were enough to place the dove above all other birds in the hearts of the people, but there is yet its highest honor to recount:

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a Voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This is the crowning glory of the innocent and tender dove. The Almighty, who knew all of His creations intimately, chose it as the medium in which His Spirit should materialize at the baptism of Christ. No other bird in the history of all the world has borne honor high as this.

THE EAGLE

"Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,
And make her nest on high?
She dwelleth on the rock, and hath her lodging
there,
Upon the crag of the rock, and the stronghold.

From thence she spieth out the prey,
And her eyes behold it afar off.
Her young ones also suck up blood:
And where the slain are, there is she."

—Job.

EAGLE STRATTON-PORTER

"Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Chapter VI

THE EAGLE

The little strip at the east end of the Mediterranean must have been the most wonderful place of all the world for natural history subjects. In that small space, under almost tropical skies, with air tempered by the great sea and mountains, which are as numerous there as in Switzerland, though lower; with the sea on the west, and a salt sea in the interior; rivers, lakes, and brooks of pure water; fountains and springs, with rich plains and fertile valleys; where does earth produce another spot of equal size so congenial as a home for all kinds of furred and feathered creatures?

In nearly every instance what Bible writers said of the birds proves their habits and characteristics unchanged to-day. From the sanity of the greater part they wrote it is almost positive that when their meaning is obscure there is an error in translation. No one of them knew the birds, or at least went into detail, as the Man of Afflictions. There is just a possibility that brooding over his troubles from the unpromising vantage of an ash-heap Job watched the creatures around him to learn if living was a rough affair for them. As he was the soul of honor, he recorded what he saw in a way to furnish a model for all following observers. Any one who can record plain truths in exquisite verse is a great genius.

Most authors to-day feel that plain fact is not poetical and must be embellished somewhat to make it attractive. The living quality of Job and all other Bible writers lies in their ability to make naked truths appealing.

What does any one need to know of an eagle not contained in this inspired poem of Job's?

"Doth the eagle mount up at thy command?"

Indeed no! It mounts at the command of its nature. With unsurpassed strength of wing in unequaled flight it soars, sails, wheels, mounts, drops, and poises motionless eyeing the sun, as it chooses. Its great wings are from seven to nine feet in sweep, and its body averages three feet in length. Those wings are often over two feet wide in their greatest extent, and sixteen inches in the least. Once a primary quill, twenty-four inches in length, dropped in my path from above cloud. With feet drawn among the feathers, the eagle stretches these large fans and sweeps cloud spaces over three hundred feet above us: or folds them and darts earthward like an arrow until it wants to recover itself and soar on high again. No other bird of history has its strength of wing, its tireless flight, and its poise and grace of motion.

Obadiah was thinking of this very thing when he wrote, "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle." Every writer in the Bible who wished to portray swift motion in cloud spaces used it as an illustration. Job said of himself:

"Now my days are swifter than a post;
They flee away, they see no good.
They are passed away as the swift ships:
As the eagle that swoopeth on prey."

Solomon included the flight of this bird among the marvels which he enumerated in Proverbs:

"There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not;
The way of an eagle in the air;
The way of a serpent upon a rock;
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea;
And the way of a man with a maid."

This swift flight of an eagle, the poise above prey, and the fierce downward plunge were in the mind of Jeremiah when he said to the Ammonites, "For thus saith the Lord; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab." As eagles were common in the affairs of life all over the Holy Land, and the sharp-shooting bowmen practically the only protection against their ravages, Moab knew exactly what Jeremiah meant. If the Almighty were going to spread His wings over them and make the fierce downward plunge of a hunger-maddened eagle seeking prey over their flocks, fowl, and children, it was time to heed the prophet's words. This same warning was given to the inhabitants of Bozrah.

Hosea cried, "Set the trumpet to thy mouth: as an eagle he cometh against the house of the Lord; because they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law." These men were hitting straight from the shoulder, and they were aiming at the heart. They were putting things just as strongly as they could honestly, and as forcibly as they knew how. Had there been a bird within their knowledge of stronger, swifter flight, fiercer habit, more appropriate to their purposes, you may

be very sure they would have used it in their comparisons and similies.

In exhorting Judah to repentance, Jeremiah fell into heroic vein under the impulse of his strong emotions, and delivered a great poetic outburst of warning:

> "Now will I also utter judgments against them.
> Behold, He shall come up as clouds,
> And His chariots shall be as a whirlwind:
> His horses are swifter than eagles.
> Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.
> O Jerusalem,
> Wash thy heart from wickedness,
> That thou mayst be saved."

You observe the line, "His horses are swifter than eagles," which were the swiftest things Jeremiah knew to use as his standard of comparison. Habakkuk could make this point no stronger when he reached the highest pitch of eloquence concerning the Chaldeans, and needed almost a similar comparison:

> "They are terrible and dreadful:
> Their judgment and dignity proceed from themselves.
> Their horses also are swifter than leopards,
> And are more fierce than the evening wolves:
> And their horsemen bear themselves proudly,
> Yea, their horsemen come from far:
> They fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour."

"And make her nest on high," wrote Job. Naturally the eagle made her nest on the top-most base she could find. Instinct told her to place it out of all danger, for she knew that in circling over mountains, hills, valleys, and desert, searching for food, she often would be absent

EAGLE NEST CAMERON

"She maketh her nest upon the rock,
Upon the crag of the rock and the stronghold."

for long periods. So the rocky summit of Hermon, ten thousand feet high; Moab, Edom, the heights of Gilead, Hamath, the rocky heights of Nazareth, Tabor, Gilboa, and all the ranges along the east bank of the Jordan were her chosen nesting sites.

There are times in good hunting country where the eagles build great nests in large trees, but with the uncounted heights of the Holy Land to offer foundations, I imagine Bible writers saw nests only upon the highest peaks of their mountains. Big nests, four and five feet across, founded on the rock, walled with sticks and twigs, and coarsely lined, that the feet of the young might grow strong like their elders by early in life gripping on something hard. In these big nests from two to three eggs were placed. Most of our eagles deposit a dirty white egg, speckled and splashed with umber. Job does not say what color the eggs of the eagles of Palestine were, neither does any other Bible writer.

As there were several different eagles, their eggs varied with species. There is no question at all but some writers confused members of the vulture family with the eagles. Micah said, "Make thee bald and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle." This had reference to the Mohammedan custom of shaving the head in mourning; but as Bible lands knew no bald eagle, the only bird to which the text could have referred was the great griffon vulture, which was bald and closely resembled an eagle in flight and some of its habits, while in others it differed. But the similarity was sufficient that any casual writer easily might have made the mistake of Micah.

Undoubtedly the whole Aquilla family were included

in the reference to eagles, and some of the vultures as well; and as the habits and characteristics of all of them were very similar, this might occur. So the eagles set their nests on the rock: "Upon the crag of the rock and the stronghold," said Job. Higher than men were likely to climb; higher, and in rougher, more barren places than beasts of the mountain would ascend; up, close heaven, so that Obadiah, in speaking of them, cried, "Though thou set thy nest among the stars!"

"From thence she spieth out the prey."

Higher than any other living creature, strength of wing unsurpassed, her nest on the top rock of the mountain, she hung above it, watching where the lion cubs lay and the leopards slunk. Wisely did they seek cave and crevice, and stand guard. From the top crag she searched the barren spaces and the low growth. Hanging on wing or perching in dead trees at the base of the mountains, she watched for the hare, the newly-dropped fawn, the kid, or, if hunger-driven, the serpent; and always the carcass of the freshly slain.

She poised above the fields and made her unerring plunge over its creeping earthy things. Birds of the mountain, valley, and plain fled from her, and only those of such dexterity of wing that she feared for her eyes dare resist her. Our kingbird is not known to have lived in Bible lands at Bible times, but with us it will attack and drive an eagle in headlong flight, because it is so small it can dodge the talons of the great bird and strike its eyes from above.

Out in the valleys and fields shepherds lost young lambs and fowl, guard as they might; and perching on

the top of a tall dead tree, rocky crag, or poising on wing, she waited until the fish hawk and kingfisher had sighted and captured prey, and then attacked and robbed them.

"Her eyes behold it afar off," wrote Job.

"Farther than any other living bird," he might have added, because anciently as we can trace the history of the eagle its habit has been to strain its eyes from the extreme heights occupied by it alone in search of food. The member we constantly use develops unusual strength until it finally attains great power. The part we do not use, gradually wears away. Witness the disappearance of the bird tail of twenty long vertebræ. Witness the eye of an eagle that drops from above cloud to snatch up a creature of the grass whose presence is unnoticed by us.

These great birds have a way, for mere pride of strength and display of power, of flying beyond our range of vision, directly into the face of the sun. That their eyes bear this light comes only through centuries of evolution. Job knew that for us it would be impossible:

> "And now men can not look on the light when it is
> bright in the skies,
> When the wind hath passed and cleansed them.
> Out of the North cometh golden splendor,
> God hath upon Him terrible majesty."

That the eye of the eagle is able to face straightly the "terrible majesty" of the "golden splendor" of the sky, in a great degree accounts for the royal appearance of the bird. Aristotle said, "because of this high flight men consider eagles the only divine birds."

[8] "Her young ones also suck up blood."

It is perfectly proper that they should. There are enough seed eaters to consume all the seed we want to spare; enough fruit lovers to tax our generosity in the orchards. Let the eagles drink blood if they like it; they are birds, and follow the course of their evolution. No one can argue with them or teach them a different way. They obey the dictates of their nature, which are the laws of the Almighty. There is no greater tragedy when the eagle snatches up a young lamb than when the butcher sends it to our tables dressed with green peas. Wise men rise to the requirements of the bird, and allow it the food it needs unmolested, as did Lord Breadalbane, one of the greatest of English peers, as a payment for the picture of the eagle's majestic form sweeping above his stretch of rocky coast. The beak and feet of the bird prove it a flesh-eater on sight. The lower mandible is short, the upper strong, with the sharp, curved tip for tearing flesh. Aristotle wrote that in age the beak of an eagle continues to curve until it closes the mouth, and it dies of starvation. He explained that this happened because the bird was once a man, and refused hospitality to a wandering stranger who asked protection.

The great feet are strong, with long toes, having sharp talons for holding and carrying prey. Surely the young sucked up the blood of the living food carried them, as was their nature, and also tore it in pieces at early age, so their strength was developed. Isaiah and Ezekiel each wrote of "ravenous" birds, that undoubtedly were eagles,

"And where the slain are, there is she."

In New Testament times Jesus observed this, as Matthew and Luke record practically the same expression of

His: "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." It is quite probable that vultures were gathered together over a carcass instead of many eagles; for they do not flock, as do vultures, but live a more solitary life in pairs.

With their untiring flight, easily sailing many times the width or length of the country in a day, from the sea to the desert east of the Jordan, from Mt. Hor to the last range of Lebanon, even Egyptward over the great desert, these mighty birds followed the fortunes of war, travel, sacrifice, and accident. They were not always particular that the carcass should be fresh. Carrion not too ripe was an agreeable change.

For this reason Moses headed the list of birds of abomination with them. The odor of the flesh must be extremely strong and disagreeable, as well as the meat itself, dark, and very tough. Eagles weigh lightly for their length and extent, because the spaces they range and their steady diet of meat keeps them very poor. No such thing as a fat eagle in freedom is known to the most exacting research of science.

After summarizing all this, what is there necessary to know of the eagle not encompassed in this description by Job? The remainder of the natural history of the chapter that includes this is quite as comprehensive of the other subjects, and it contains not a trace of myth or superstition. In contrast with it, Aristotle described three kinds of eagles. Of a black one he said: "It is swift, elegant, liberal, fearless, warlike, and of good omen: for it neither cries nor screams. This is the only one that rears and educates its young." He speaks of eagles circling in flight to avoid traps when watching for prey like hares, and

he said that if an eagle thrust its young from the nest, the vultures took it up and fed it.

Pliny discussed the eagle next after the ostrich and the phœnix, and in a manner which proved that he enjoyed his subject. In the beginning he said, "Eagles carry the price both for honor and strength." He described one species that was said to have teeth, and mixed some very good natural history with much amusing tradition. He said one eagle "hath a greedy and hungry worm always in her gorge and craw, and never is content, but whining and grumbling." He wrote of a "mongrel, engendered of diverse sorts, called the ossifrage." He told of four eagles that had a stone called Gargates in their nests. "This stone is medicinal, and singular good for many diseases, and if it be put into the fire it will never a whit consume. Now this stone, as they say, is also with child: for if a man shake it, he shall hear another to rattle and sound within, as it were in the belly or womb of it. But that virtue medicinable, above said is not in these stones, if they be not fallen out of the very nest from the ærie."

How an eagle attacks a deer is described thus: "The eagles maintain battle with the red deer, even the stag and the hind. The manner of the eagle is, after she hath wallowed in the dust, and gathered a deal thereof among her feathers, to settle upon the horns of the deer aforesaid, to shake the same off into his eyes, to flap and beat him about the face with her wings, until she drive him among the rocks, and there force him to fall down from thence headlong, and so break his neck."

He also wrote that the eagle was so powerful that if its wing quills were laid in a box among the feathers of

YOUNG EAGLES

CAMERON

"Her young ones also suck up blood."

other birds, those of the eagle would "devour and consume all the rest." The more eagle history one reads by pagan writers, the more enjoyable become the majestic lines of the Christians, Moses, Job, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk.

Moses had something to say of the eagle in a beautiful song setting forth the mercy of God, in Deuteronomy:

> "For the Lord's portion is His people;
> Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.
> He found him in desert land,
> And in the waste howling wilderness;
> He compassed him about, He cared for him,
> He kept him as the apple of His eye.
>
> As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
> That fluttereth over her young,
> He spread abroad his wings, he took them,
> He bear them on his pinions;
> The Lord alone did lead him,
> And there was no strange God with him.
>
> He made him to ride on the high places of the
> earth,
> And he did eat the increase of the fields,
> He made him to suck honey out of the rock,
> And oil out of the flinty rock.
> Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of rams,
> And lambs of the breed of Bashan, and goats
> With the fat of kidneys of wheat;
> And of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine."

In the old version of the Bible this text reads, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings"— This is such atrocious natural history that I can not conceive how any one ever attributed

it to Moses, for he knew that if an eagle ever carried her young in flight she bore it in her talons. The revision makes this text clear, and the ornithology unquestionable.

Moses, in speaking for the Almighty, also exclaimed with poetic utterance, in Exodus, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself." Here he was merely using the bird's strength of wing in a symbolic manner to suggest that, like it, the Almighty would bear His children with His strength.

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed that he was "driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws." So even unconsciously these people felt the impression of the power and ferocity of the bird, and in their dreams they saw it in terrifying pictures. In John's vision of the throne of God, one of the beasts, "full of eyes before and behind," was an eagle; and in another vision he saw a woman to whom "were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness." The practice of adding the wings of an eagle as an emblem of strength and power was common in those days, and centuries before. Symbol writing is filled with bulls, lions, dragons, beasts of all kinds, and men, portrayed with eagle's wings.

Once Daniel had a dream in which "four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings." Ezekiel spoke the parable and the riddle of the two eagles and the vine. In this vision the first eagle was seen naturally, save perhaps more brightly colored. "A great eagle, with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers,

which had diverse colors, came into Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar." "There was also another great eagle, with great wings and many feathers."

In speaking of long life, David used the eagle in comparison, as specimens have lived to a great age in captivity; and how long in freedom, no one knows. In exhorting the people to bless God for His mercy, he cried:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits;
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and
tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;
So thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

In his great battle chant over the death of Saul and Jonathan, David used the eagle in comparison, and originated two phrases that are every-day quotations with us: one concerning the keeping of a secret, and the other referring to close friends who go out of life together. After he had recovered somewhat from the shock of the news brought him by the Amalekite, who confessed he had killed Saul at his request, David broke forth:

"How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain
upon you,
Neither fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, as of one not anointed with oil.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel,
Weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle!
O Jonathan, slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:

Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished?"

Another reference to the eagle is where Isaiah grew poetical in comforting the people of God, and addressed them thus:

"Hast thou not known?
Hast thou not heard,
That the everlasting God, the Lord,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Fainteth not, neither is weary?
There is no searching His understanding.

He giveth power to the faint,
And to them that hath no might
He increaseth strength.

Even the youth shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles;
They shall run and not be weary;
They shall walk and not faint."

THE SPARROW

"Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house,
Even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King
and my God."

—David.

SPARROW STRATTON-PORTER

"Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house."

Chapter VII

THE SPARROW

Undoubtedly no other of the small birds included in the Hebrew "tzippor" was so friendly near houses and in gardens as the sparrow. It seems from the text that this word is indiscriminately translated "sparrow" and "birds" or "fowl," as it appears almost forty times in Bible text and is, as a rule, translated "bird," but again distinctively "sparrow." The word covered all small birds nearest sparrows in characteristics and habits, all of which were allowed for food. When the sparrow was designated it was, no doubt, in places where it best filled the requirements of the text.

All of these little brown birds of friendly habit that we think of as like our sparrows swarmed over the plains of Gennesaret. They were of plainer, more even color than ours, the same size, and of slightly varying families. We have at least sixty-seven different sparrows. Of these the chipping and song sparrows are birds of the small shrubs and bushes, and the ground sparrow nests on the earth. I believe all of these birds originated in Arabia, also our English sparrow, that is imported. Sparrows are the domestic fowl of the wild, and since their history has been kept they have been noted for their love of man and their fearless disposition.

In the north of Palestine, the land of Gennesaret, and on the west of the Sea of Galilee, there lies hilly country, plains, and fertile fields, scattered over with villages.

Here, around the foot of Mt. Tabor and over the plains of Esdraelon, swarmed the sparrows, friendly little birds, seeking the protection of man. The bushes of every tiller of the soil, the vineyards of the wine-growers, and the orchards of fruit-raisers were filled with their lively chatter.

The only mention Pliny made of the sparrow was to point out the neat little hop with which it traveled on the ground or on buildings. It flew in short stretches from bush to bush, and built a small beautiful nest. If this was placed in bushes, there was an outside of tiny sticks and twigs, and the inner lining of hairs wound round and round. Ground nests dispensed with the outside work, and in a little tuft of weeds or grass, which formed an arching cover, the small, round bowl of hair was placed, and in it from four to six bluish, speckled eggs. The old ones with endless chatter hunted food for the young, bringing to them in a day hundreds of tiny insects and worms. The feces were carried from the nest, so that on leaving it was immaculately clean and showed no sign of ever having been used.

Because they nested so closely around houses and were so protected, they brought off their big broods in safety, and two or three in a year. Thus in congenial territory they soon increased to great numbers. They were very numerous west of Galilee almost to the coast. They nested in thorn, bramble, hazel, and juniper bushes, and among the grasses of earth. They built in the vineyards, and hunted worms and bugs on the citron, pomegranate, fig, and olive trees of adjoining orchards.

While the women and children cultivated their onions, beans, mandrakes, lentils, melons, and cucumbers, the busy little sparrows nested among the small bushes or

SPARROW STRATTON-PORTER

"Not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God."

on the gourd and grape vines covering the arbors and houses. Their notes made cheery accompaniment to the workers, and the birds were busy also; for the grape and big gourd leaves covered families of a half dozen, with mouths agape clamoring for food, and the happy little parents had to search over herb beds of mint and rue and the vines and bushes for worms.

So that they were a part of the most intimate life of the people, and they were common residents of every garden and friendly with every one. They must have lived around great cities and homed near kingly palaces, for they are specifically mentioned twice by David, and several times collectively by men of wealth and high position. Not only the gardens of the lowly, but those cultivated by the servants of the wealthy, were appropriated by the cheery little sparrows. They were at home in Nazareth and Endor, and all the other villages rang with their happy notes. One after another of the Bible writers mentioned them in their text. No doubt they were common in the garden of Mary at Nazareth, and sang to her as she worked, while Joseph was away carpentering. They were daily companions of Jesus near His humble home, when He was a child. Here we may be sure they were protected fully, as they expected to be when they located; for I know the boy Jesus did not throw stones at birds and tear down their nests.

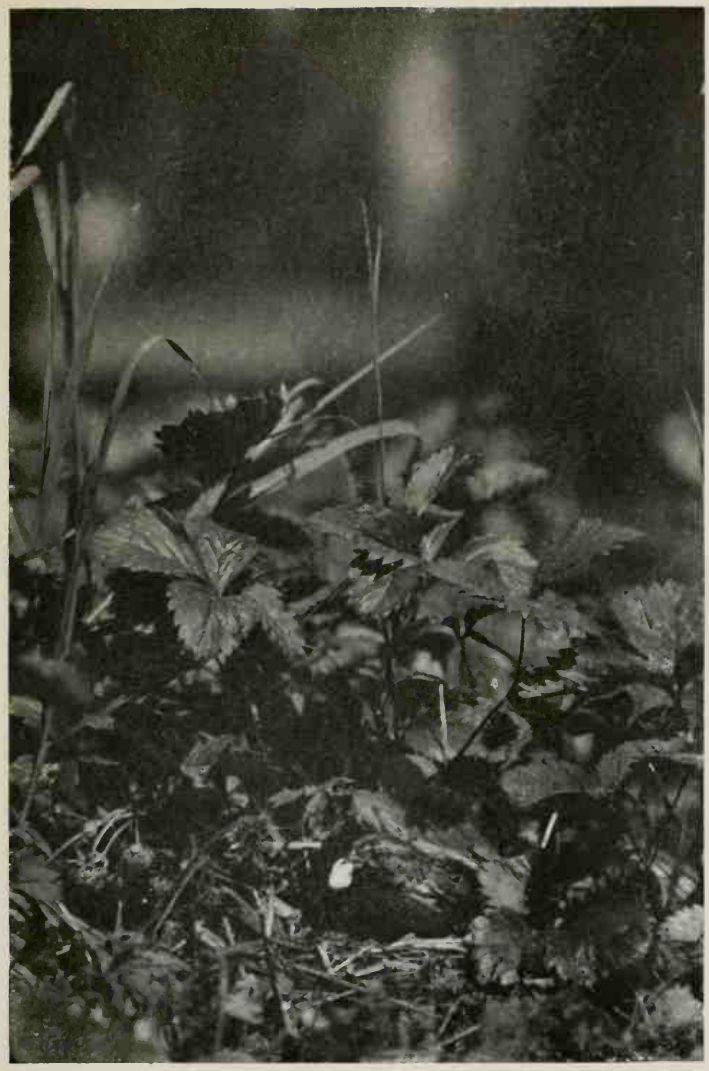
Moreover, sparrows were of the birds that claimed the shelter of the temple, so they would be protected when building in the vines, orchards, or gardens of any home. David said of them:

> "Yea, the sparrow hath found her a house,
> Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my
> King, and my God."

I think I should have loved to worship in that great temple at Jerusalem, where the doves and the swallows and the sparrows were allowed to nest and raise their young unmolested. It appeals to me that all the choirs of expensive singers that ever chanted anthems at divine service would not be half so pleasing to an Almighty God as the prayers of the faithful raised in that old temple with the accompaniment of the cooing of doves, the love-notes of swallows, and the mating ecstasy of the sparrows. For these birds are very sweet singers in almost every branch of the family, though some few are almost songless.

Commentators are quite sure that the sparrow of David in the lines, "I watch, and am become like a sparrow that is alone upon the housetop," was not a sparrow. They think not, because these are such friendly birds that authorities are quite sure if there was one on the housetop there would be a half dozen, but there is a possibility that the text is right. Perhaps this friendliest of all birds had seen its mate snared out in the valley, or its nest destroyed in some way, and had made a deep impression on David because it was sitting in a lonely and solitary way for the short time that birds mourn.

The Bible makes it evident that all temple birds were protected around houses; but it also makes it equally plain that all small birds of unobjectionable habits were used for food. Out in the valleys, among the foothills, in the bramble and thorn thickets, the sparrows flocked and were snared and netted without mercy. This is the basis of the reason that they so love to build and find food near homes. Jesus asked, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" And again, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is for-



SPARROW STRATTON-PORTER

These friendly little birds nested in gardens.

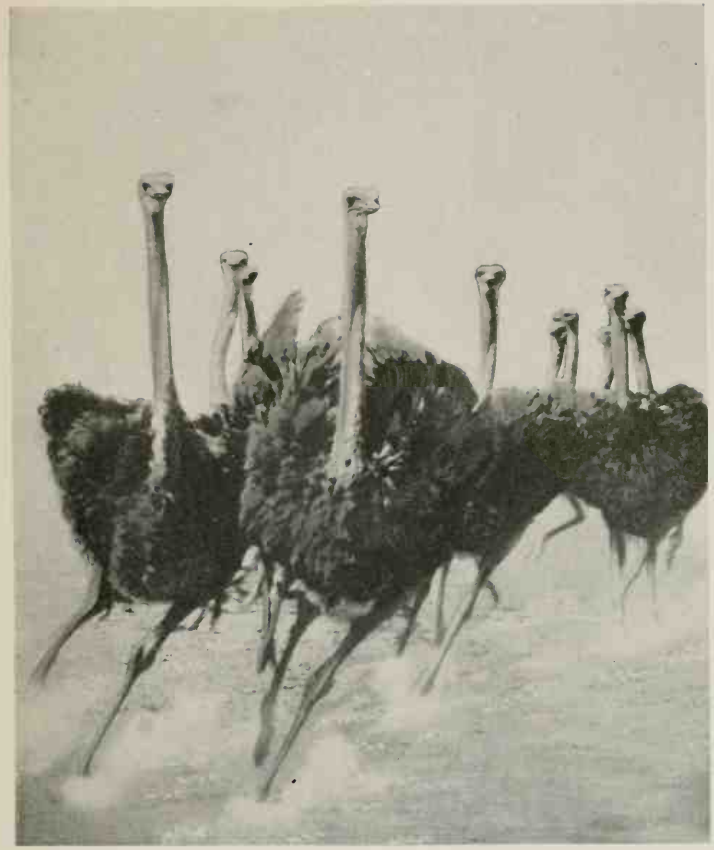
gotten in the sight of God." These records by Matthew and Luke of the words of Jesus indicate that sparrows were used for food in those lands in Bible times, just as they are now.

When the tiny birds are killed, skinned, opened, and strung upon wire and roasted, they are sold in Eastern markets for tidbits—a bird to a mouthful. It almost would seem that God had forgotten them, but Jesus said He did not. This is probably the origin of the oft-quoted line, "He marks the fall of the sparrow."

Further south, in Judea, the climate and location was not so congenial. There they did not flock, but were found in pairs. To-day in the Jordan Valley the thorn trees can be seen to be almost weighted down with nests, and sparrows are taken in the greatest numbers for food, so that it is truly a wise bird that finds a house for herself. If it is the home of people, she is always sure of safety. If it is the house of the Lord, then, indeed, she has a refuge.

THE OSTRICH

"I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the dust,
The beasts of the field shall honor me, the dragons and the ostriches." —Isaiah.



OSTRICHES CAWSTON

"*What time he lifteth himself abroad*
He scorneth the horse and his rider."

Chapter VIII

THE OSTRICH

In the thirty-ninth chapter of Job, which contains much fine natural history, we find the most that the Bible records concerning the ostrich. It seems that in translating the Hebrew words "ya'anah," which mean "greediness," and "bath haya'anah," "the daughter of greediness," and which have reference to the indiscriminate diet of the ostrich, part of the time are rendered "ostrich," to which bird they apply; and part of the time "owl," to which they do not. For, while the owl sometimes chokes itself swallowing whole some rather large prey it has taken, it is not a greedy or a promiscuous eater. The mere fact that it is a bird of darkness, and not always fortunate in capturing food, frequently leaves it very hungry. The bodies of owls are lean, like those of eagles. Neither was the owl habitual in several places mentioned by Isaiah and Jeremiah, where our old version is translated "owl" and undoubtedly should read "ostrich."

The ostrich found its place in Bible history on account of its voice, its companions, and its location. When disturbed or uneasy in the night, it raised a cry with a gutteral utterance like the roar of a lion. When it wandered to the northern borders of the desert of Shur, across the barren stretch of Idumea, or where Arabian sands meet vegetation along the eastern border of Palestine, its night moan was terrifying. Belated travelers

shuddered with fear; the night watchers wrapped their cloaks closer around them, and strained their eyes peering into the darkness; sleepers moved restlessly; and the sick prayed for protection. The cry of the ostrich was added to many pictures of desolation because it was a fearful thing and people dreaded the sound.

This bird did not keep agreeable company. Not only was its voice lifted in unison with the quavering owl and night hawk cries, but it lived at the edge of the desert, where the vulture and the eagle preyed; where the bear and the lion prowled; where the jackal yelped; where the asp and adder crawled from rocky caverns to sun on the sands, and the scorpion stung the unwary. It homed where wild men of the desert crept as close to civilization as they dared, and where thieves and robbers hid themselves to attack caravans coming from other lands. Unless travelers were mounted on fleet horses or camels, and journeying in large bands, these neighbors of the ostrich were none to be desired. No dweller of the spicy gardens of Lebanon, no harvester of the plains of Esdraelon or Samaria, no shepherd of rough Galilean hills, no fisher of the seas, and no merchant of the coast cared to become a "companion to ostriches."

Their location was not only this fringe of wilderness approaching the desert, but it included the great terror itself: the trackless miles stretching away for marches that were too often endless; the yielding paths, obliterated by every contrary wind that blew; the biting storms of blinding sands fine as powder; the scorching sun beating unobstructed until heat from earth arose to meet heat from heaven and the faces of men were burned and their flesh peeled from their bodies. Here to fail in locating

water if the supply carried gave out meant to lie down in the heat and in parching agony await the final swoop of the lammergeier, the kite, and the eagle. The wilderness had its terrors; but there were small edible animals, wild grapes and honey, and water to support vegetation, so that there was some chance for life. The forlorn hope of stumbling upon an oasis was the only mitigation to the horror of the desert. So that of all the birds of the Bible that were used to inspire fear in those people to whom the desert stood a daily menace because they often were forced to breathe its scorching air, the ostrich, which made its home there, was the most effective.

Once Job cried in agony:

> "I go mourning without the sun,
> I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help.
> I am a brother to jackals,
> And a companion to ostriches.
> My skin is black and falleth from me,
> And my bones are burned with heat."

This in the old version reads "owls," with a marginal reference to ostrich, which rather seems to leave you at liberty to take your choice. The first line, "I go mourning without the sun," might seem to indicate the owl, were it not for the fact that this bird is not now, and never was, "a daughter of greediness." To be a companion to jackals, any bird would have had to haunt the edge of the desert, which is true ostrich country; also the sun on the hot sands soon would blacken and peel the skin, and even make the very bones feel "burned," as Job described.

Micah, when portraying the judgment which threatened Samaria, wrote:

> "For this I will wail and howl;
> I will go stripped and naked:
> I will make a wailing like the jackals,
> And a mourning like the ostriches."

Here again the old version wavered between owl and ostrich, and most people, remembering the doleful night cries of the owl, gave it the preference in this instance. But the former definition is correct in all cases in which it is applied to the ostrich, and added to this is the fact that this bird sometimes cries fearfully in the night, and when it does, the owl is forgotten. African travelers have mistaken this sound for the hoarse roar of a lion; one writer says the "lowing of an ox in great pain." Either of these cries would combine with the howling of the jackal in a picture of desolation as perfectly as the hooting of an owl.

Isaiah, describing the fall of Babylon, prophesied:

> "But wild beasts of the desert shall be there;
> And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;
> And ostriches shall dwell there,
> And satyrs shall dance there."

In this instance also the old version reads "owl," with the usual marginal reference to ostrich. The "daughter of greediness" would be in accustomed company with the "wild beasts of the desert;" but if the ruins of houses were to be occupied by birds, here is an instance where the owl would be perfectly at home, and there seems more probability that it was the bird intended.

PAIR OF OSTRICHES CAWSTON

"The wing of the ostrich rejoiceth,
But are her pinions and feathers kindly?"

When Isaiah predicted utter destruction in Edom he left no room for discussion as to which bird was indicated by putting in both, for he said, "The owl and the raven shall dwell there," and a few lines further, "It shall be a habitation for jackals, and a court for ostriches."

When the voice of the Almighty spoke out of the whirlwind to Job it said, as our latest version records these utterances:

> "The wing of the ostrich rejoiceth;
> But are her pinions and feathers kindly?
> For she leaveth her eggs in the earth,
> And warmeth them in the dust,
> And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,
> Or that the wild beast may trample them.
> She is hardened against her young ones as if
> they were not hers:
> Though her labor be in vain, she is without fear;
> Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,
> Neither hath He imparted to her understanding.
> What time she lifteth herself on high,
> She scorneth the horse and his rider."

I am a little skeptical about the Almighty having said this. I think Job had one of those inspired flights of his and was so intensely in earnest that he felt he was recording divine thought. Part of this is good natural history and part is not. The Almighty, who planned and watched the evolution of the ostrich, would not have said several things here recorded.

"The wing of the ostrich" had great reason to rejoice: it came so very near being no wing at all. But then it was only wonderful things that were touched upon in the whole of this thirty-ninth chapter of Job.

It was a marvel that an ostrich should have wings and feathers; for it had more attributes of a beast than any other bird of which I can think. It seems much more nearly related to the giraffe than to the eagle. The deserts of Africa evolved the noblest form of the bird, which bore thirst with camel-like stolidity. When this thirst grew unbearable, it broke open and ate the wild gourds and melons that were found near spots of moisture, as the lions and tigers are said to have done when hard pressed for water.

It grew to a height of from six to eight feet and weighed from two to three hundred pounds. The neck was long, covered with down, through which the windpipe showed, and large bites could be seen to slide down the gullet. The bill was broad, flat, with a round tip, and the mandibles very flexible. The head was extremely small, compared with the body; but the eyes were large for the size of the head, and in centuries of straining them across the sands of the desert for animals colored so like it as to be inconspicuous, or dust-covered caravans of men, the ostrich developed powerful sight.

The bare legs of the bird were long, strong, with muscles like steel bands from the immense distances traveled in searching for food or in fleeing from pursuers. It had a foot not far removed from the split hoof of the beast. The inner toe was seven inches long, with a claw-like hoof; and the outer smaller, with no claw. With its strength of leg and weight of toes it could strike a blow that made it immune from attack of animals of its haunts having the size and strength of a leopard.

Pliny opened his discourse on the history of birds with the ostrich, of which he wrote: "They are the

greatest of all other fowls, and in manner of the nature of four-footed beasts." After noting their ineffectual wings, the value of their feathers, and much other good history concerning them, he added this astounding statement: "Cloven hoofs they have like red deer, and with them they fight; for good they be to catch up stones withal, and with their legs they whurle them back as they run away against those that chase them."

Its wings were a mere excuse for wing; the muscles soft and flabby. They would not nearly bear the weight of the bird, but in starting to run they were seen to be lifted and beaten as in flight. Of course, this assisted in attaining speed, or the bird would not have used them in this manner. When she was beating them in flight, no doubt she did appear as if she were waving them triumphantly and rejoicing in them; but when fleeing pursuers at utmost speed, the wings were pressed close the sides.

The body was covered with a soft, flexible feathering, the wings and tail growing long plumes. On the female, which was smaller than the male, the colors were a soft gray, mixed with white; the tail and wing plumes white. The male was a glossy black, combined with white, and white wing and tail plumes.

The ostrich has three physical peculiarities which always stagger scientists. First it has eyelashes, as almost no other bird. I should say that these lashes were evolved in the desert life of the species. They would shade the eyeball and protect it from the brilliant rays of desert sun. When running in small flocks, as is the habit of the bird unless pursued, these lashes would help to keep dust from the eyes also. Then it has on each wing two

plumeless shafts, like great porcupine quills. It is difficult to learn why they are there, but they may be helpful in defense when attacked. That they have some especial purpose, you may be sure. Nature is economical in providing anatomy, and all the parts given bird or man are necessary. Perhaps the queerest thing of all pertaining to this great beast-bird is that it has a bladder which collects uric acid like a mammal, the rarest organ of a feathered creature on earth, I think.

So here we have a big bird, standing eight feet in height, weighing three hundred pounds, with bare legs running and kicking as a horse; long, curling plumes on wings and tail, eyelashes, and the bladder of a beast. The purpose of this chapter seems to have been to make Job feel his inferiority to the Creator. With such questions as it contains hurled at him, no wonder poor Job cried out in agony and humbled himself even to sackcloth and the ash-heap.

Of all the queer compounds in nature, bird or beast, auk, stork, giraffe, kangaroo, alligator, or turtle, not one surpasses the ostrich as a compound of contradictory parts. What have eyelashes and exquisite long, curling plumes of snow to do with a beast having a bladder and capable of lifting a hoof and cracking like an eggshell the skull of a man? Well might Job humble himself before one of the greatest marvels of the Creator!

> "But are her pinions and feathers kindly?
> For she leaveth her eggs on the earth,
> And warmeth them in the dust."

The dread sands of the desert of Arabia, which Moses skirted on the south in his long journey to the Promised

OSTRICH NEST

CAWSTON

"She leaveth her eggs on the earth,
And warmeth them in the dust."

Land, extending across the lower end of the great salt sea and eastward into Syria, were the home of the ostrich known to Bible writers. There, where desert merged with vegetation, where the tropical sun streamed unobstructed, where the camel came in lolling from his long journey across the hot sands, and men covered their heads and fainted with heat, the ostrich left her eggs on the earth and warmed them in the dust.

The only marvel is that they were not baked in the process. But it was to prevent this, no doubt, that she covered them, sometimes to the depth of a foot. Where no rain fell for long periods; where hot sunshine beat upon sand every day, driving warmth deeper and deeper, until heat began rising from earth to meet heat falling from the sun, it really seemed as if eggs might be left to hatch by themselves, as do our turtle eggs, which can not be brooded by the shell-encased mothers and must perforce be hatched by the rays of the sun, as were the ostrich eggs. But these early writers forgot to state that, when night began to approach, the birds returned to the nest and the father covered the eggs to keep their temperature from falling to a dangerous degree, and only left when the sun had risen and grown warm enough to take his place again. So the pinions and feathers of the male bird were "kindly," for they did warm the eggs when needful. In colder locations, and where there is nothing to cover eggs, ostriches in these days take turns in brooding.

The nest of an ostrich is just a little hollow in desert sand, at the present, for C. G. Schillings, the greatest natural history photographer who ever penetrated Africa, secured a reproduction of a nest containing twenty-four

eggs by the best count I can make. These eggs weigh three pounds each on an average, and their shells are so strong that they are made into drinking vessels by natives living near the haunts of the ostrich. It is the custom, on finding a nest, to take a long stick and draw out an egg and examine the state of incubation. If it has advanced so as to spoil the egg for their use, the nest is left, and protected if possible.

If the eggs are fresh, they are taken out, a few at a time, the operator keeping as far from the nest as possible, so that no taint of his body remains around the location. If this can be done successfully, the birds will keep on laying; if not, they will desert and build another nest. They are eaten by natives, and have been tried by hungry Europeans. One egg is sufficient for a small family. There is a possibility that these are the eggs to which Job refers as having tasteless whites without salt.

The number of eggs in a nest was due to the fact that the birds were polygamous. One male led a family of two to seven females. They deposited their eggs in a common nest. It was on account of this habit of several using one nest and leaving the sun to incubate in the middle of the day, while the birds ranged far for food, that the female became weaned from the habit of brooding. When several females owned a nest it was not easy to decide to which one it most belonged; so all of them united in allowing the father to look after it, and they serenely enjoyed themselves while he concerned himself most about the nest and young. But at least half of the brooding was done by the ardent sun of the desert.

"And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,
Or that the wild beast may trample them."

If the Almighty said she forgot, she did—there can be no question about that—but it occurs to me that it was wisdom on her part. Those eggs buried in the sand were not so conspicuous as when the bulk of a three-hundred-pound bird was covering them. For the outskirts of the desert belonged to the natives, who strayed as far as they dared; and to the jackal, hyena, leopard, wolf, bear, lion, and to the vulture, hawk, and eagle soaring above, all of which were fond of great eggs and young birds. It would appeal to me that the eggs were much better protected from their natural enemies alone than when brooded, especially by the male.

The colors of the female and the young were as if feathers had grown among the sands and rocks of the desert and fastened themselves to the backs of the birds. No finer exhibition of coloration that was a protection could be found among all the splendid examples of birds and beasts of desert wastes, red sands, and blackened vegetation. They seemed a part of their surroundings, and as inconspicuous as anything of their size could be. It was their great bulk which discovered them, for the desert folk all have sharp eyes, as well as the eagle and the hawk sailing above. So I really think the nest of the ostrich was safest in the heat of the day with the bird away from it.

"She is hardened against her young as if they were
not hers;
Though her labor be in vain, she is without fear."

The truth was that in a communal nest the ostrich did not know which of the young were hers. One egg was very like another, and when six or seven hens placed

two or three dozen eggs in one nest, and the male brooded at night and the sun by day. I am not going to believe that, when the young emerged, each mother knew from which egg her bird came. So she was not particularly "hardened against her young:" she was in ignorance of which of the young were hers. As this was the result of the evolution of the bird, it was scarcely fair to blame her for her nature. In lamenting over the sins of Zion, Jeremiah said:

> "Even the jackals draw out the breast;
> They give suck to their young ones:
> The daughter of my people is become cruel,
> Like the ostrich of the wilderness."

So there must have existed, even in the beginning of time, among the earliest people, this idea that it was a cruel thing for the ostrich to leave her nest to the mercies of natives, beasts, and sun incubation.

Neither do I believe the old story that the mother birds laid some of the eggs on the outside of the nest, so that the young would find food ready when they hatched. Like all other birds, the young would emerge provided with nourishment for the first day, and afterward this family is able to follow their elders stoutly, and pick up bits of food shown them. I think the truth was that in a communal nest several females often desired to deposit an egg at the same time, and as they could not all have the nest, those outside crowded as closely as possible, and laid on the sand. What else could they have done? And her labors were not altogether in vain. There were so many eggs in a nest that half of them could be lost and the birds still flourish. The ostrich lives

YOUNG OSTRICHES CAWSTON

"She is hardened against her young,
As if they were not hers."

on, when all other great birds of its size that used to stalk the earth are extinct. It was quite true that she seemed "without fear," for she was found near the edges of the desert and on spots of oases, living in perfect accord with herds of zebra, antelope, giraffe, and other animals that fed on vegetable diet. I scarcely think any one had seen her exhibit much fondness for jackals, wolves, leopards, bears, or tigers.

> "Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,
> Neither hath He imparted to her understanding."

There are several things to which this may refer. The bird may not have had the wisdom of the raven, but she did very well. She is still numerous in her haunts. Summing up all the things that threaten her and her young, she is in luck to be alive and reproduce herself. I think she was wise when she placed her eggs as nearly in the nest as she could, if she could not get them inside. Possibly human egg hunters would be satisfied with those outside, and animals also.

When the sun could incubate her eggs as well as she, it seemed sensible to go away and have a good time. Her presence near the nest might be more of a menace than a protection. If other creatures did not see her, they undoubtedly would hear if she talked, for her desert song was a roar. She had a harsh cackle, probably, when she successfully placed an egg, as a hen: she said gentle things in pointing out food to young near her feet; and hissed when attacked or angry.

If she appeared unfeeling toward her young, the emergencies of her life had evolved those traits in her, and that she possessed them was not her fault. She followed

the laws of her nature as did all of the wild; and while to me their ways are the marvel of creation, they very seldom become pitiful, because they are the laws of necessity and the same by which man has developed from the beginning. Nature is so very coldblooded that some of her processes seem distinctly cruel, viewed from a humane standpoint. That the ostrich did not fear for her young and hover over them was because of the communal nest and the fact that she did not often brood on her eggs; so she was not bound to her nest as most birds were which brooded day and night from nine to twenty-one days. Natives gave the fact that ostriches swallow large, hard objects indiscriminately, as one cause for thinking them foolish; another was that they would not swerve from a given course when pursued; and another that they run away from their young.

Recent writers think that the old story of the ostrich hiding her head and feeling herself safe is not true. I have a sneaking belief in the story. It is so very plausible. In all time the bird has been pursued for its splendid plumage. Now on the desert, when it has run until it can go no longer, and when cover for its two or three hundred pounds' bulk would be very difficult to find, it appeals to me that it would be instinctive with the bird to select a spot that appeared to afford shelter, hide its head, and trust to its likeness to the surroundings for concealment. With females and young this would be very possible. With the male's stronger coloring it would not be so easy. But it appeals to me as the thing which would happen naturally.

"What time she lifteth up herself on high,
She scorneth the horse and its rider."

In good condition an ostrich could run half a day, or even longer, and could acquire and sustain a speed of sixty miles an hour for the first part of the journey. Pursuers on swift Arabian horses could only hope to overtake the birds by resorting to a strategy they could not fathom. While they were accused of being indifferent to their nest and young, these birds had places that were home, and that they did not like to leave. So when pursued, instead of running in a straight line, they circled around their location in great rings. Having learned this, mounted men took cross cuts and intercepted the birds, thus capturing them in a circular flight when they could not have been overtaken in straight. With long, bare legs skimming the sands of the desert; with lifted, beating wings to give impetus; able to bear thirst like the camels; these great birds fled across country when pursued, leaving a trail of dust behind them as they flashed over dry sands, past oases, grass, and palm —on and on in one great circle until exhausted. So they lifted themselves on high, and in very fact scorned the horse and rider who followed in straight chase.

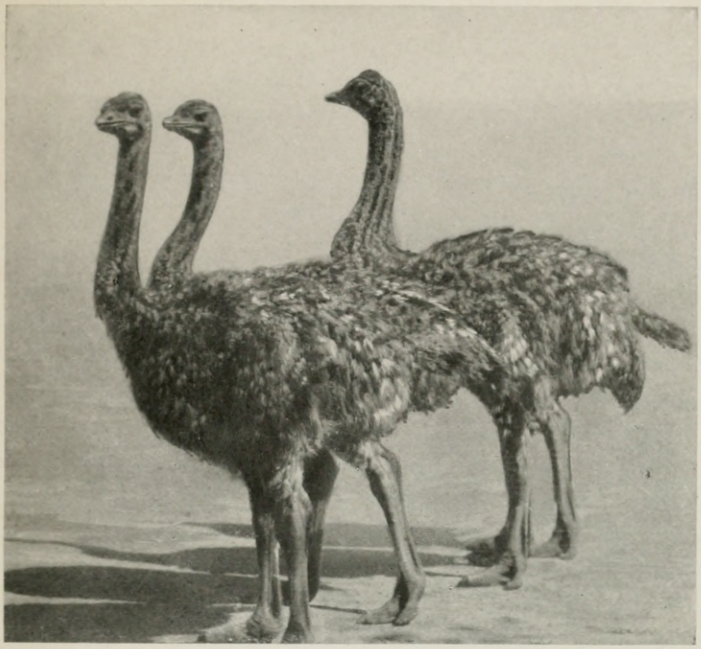
Because the ostrich is included among the Birds of the Bible, it may well be inferred that it is one of the ancients of bird history. It was in the earliest Mosaic lists of abominations for food. The old bird soon grew extremely tough and rank in flesh, and lived to eighty years in captivity. There was nothing in its diet to make it unfit for men to eat. It lived on vegetables and tropical fruits, which it found where desert touched oasis, mountain, and fertile plain. It swallowed large, hard pieces of food, and then, as small birds used tiny pebbles in maceration, these big birds picked up large ones. As

the young birds would be of tender flesh, I can see no reason why they should not have been eaten as well as the eggs; and no doubt they were, by desert tribes.

They are of the birds which have been considered among the prerogatives of royalty, as history tells us that the cruel and wicked Roman emperor Elagabalus had ostrich brains served at feasts 204 A. D. This appears quite as bad as dishes of larks' tongues and peafowl brains, upon which these awful men loved to feast. Surely the world is growing infinitely better. Even an emperor who did such things now would not be safe from the sentiment of the people.

The beautiful feathers of the birds have been used as decorations for royalty, female hat and hair ornaments, male lodge paraphernalia, and as an emblem of royalty. Three white ostrich plumes are the badge of the Prince of Wales to-day. So wonderful are ostrich feathers, and so prized, that enough of them could not be secured from the wild birds of Asia, Africa, and a slightly different species in South America; so men have gone into the business of importing, taming, and breeding these birds in suitable locations.

With us they thrive in the climate of California, Arizona, or Florida, and a number of farms have been established on which many birds are raised, and are very profitable. One male is given two females and several acres of ground, for the birds must have range to be healthy. The eggs are laid upon the earth and brooded over more in our colder climate than in their native home. Some breeders use incubators. The Cawston Ostrich Farm, of Pasadena, allows the females to make their nests and raise their young under as nearly natural conditions as possible.



YOUNG OSTRICHES CAWSTON

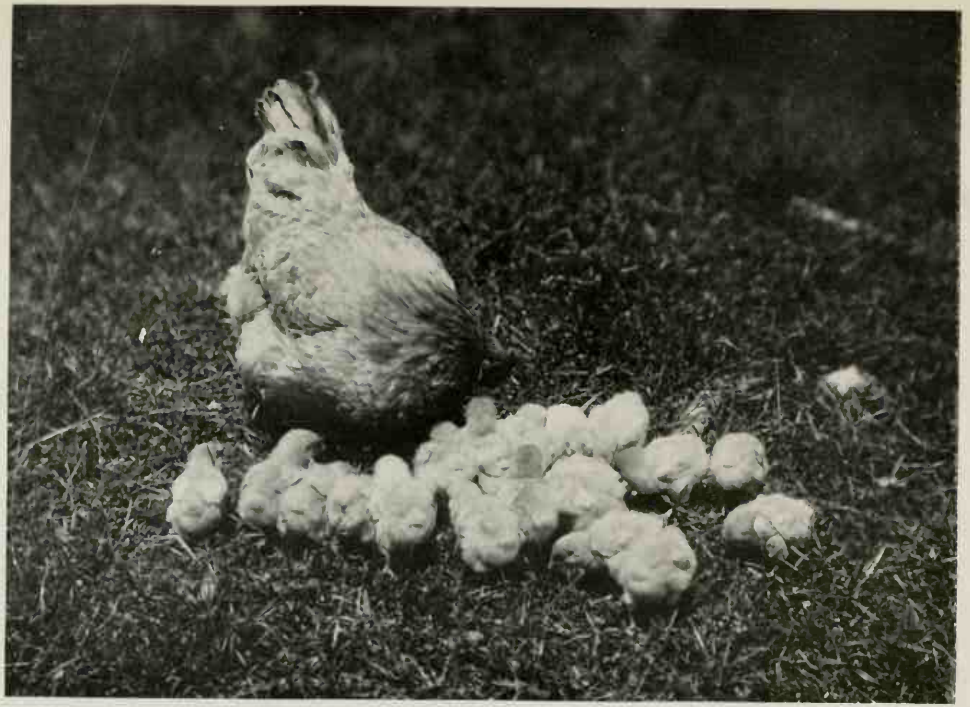
Ostrich orphans.

The feathers are exquisite on captive birds, as they can be carefully tended, allowed to grow full size, and picked at perfection. Of course, they are judiciously selected, trimmed, curled, and colored before being marketed. Imported birds at feather-producing age are valued at five hundred dollars each. Their plumes can be plucked more frequently than you would think, and while single feathers average about seven dollars each, long ones are fastened together in great fluffy, delicately colored plumes over a yard in length, of many spines thickness, of every delicate tint of the rainbow, and selling from forty to a hundred dollars.

But I wish I had just one fine, long single feather dropped naturally by a bird as it crossed the hills of Edom in changing feeding grounds from Arabia to Syria; or along the foothills of the Lebanon range where it meets the desert. Then that plume would symbolize to me not only all the great and noble bird means, not all a thing of beauty represents, but it would be the key to a vision in which I would see the tawny hot sands of the glowing eastern desert, the purple skies, the shimmering palm-shaded pools of water, the wilderness like unto that in which John cried out, and the long line of swaying camels starting across the trackless sands, perhaps on the way to Babylon.

THE COCK AND HEN

"How often would I have gathered thy children together,
Even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings,
And ye would not!" —LUKE.



HEN AND CHICKENS

STRATTON-PORTER

"As a hen gathereth her chickens."

Chapter IX

THE COCK AND HEN

Several of the disciples quoted Him, but Jesus Himself was responsible for the only direct mention of what we call "domestic fowl," in the Bible. It was the constant practice of the Great Teacher to draw comparisons and similes from objects in sight of His hearers, and much of the striking force of His work is due to this ability to point a moral from simple homely things, so that all hearers received the full force of the illustrations. He was never seeking after oratorical effects, and never trying to prove how much He knew. On the contrary, it seemed to be a continual purpose to point out to His followers the commonest things of life, and surprise them with how much *they* knew that they had not realized.

If you watch an audience which a speaker is trying to daze with his mental attainments, you may see mouths slightly agape; but you will see cold, hard faces. But if the talker has the wit to "point his moral, and adorn his tale" with illustrations his audience recognizes, you will observe heads nodding approval, and smiling faces aglow with working brains. This was always the method of Jesus. He noted every simple, common thing along the way, and when He came to speak, the parable of the mustard-seed, the sower, and the net that was cast into the sea went straight to the heart of every hearer. When He made comparisons, the house on the sand, the foolish

virgins, and the brooding hen served as nothing else could to convince followers of the points He strove to make. His simple, forceful, plain speech made David, Isaiah, and Solomon seem just a trifle grandiloquent in comparison. When you read His sayings you are in home country. You can lay aside your commentary, He explains Himself.

One of the most frequently quoted expressions of Jesus was suggested by a common, brooding hen. Darwin said the red jungle fowl of India was the "parent stock of the domestic races." It was found in the Philippines, India, China, and Malay Peninsula. In plumage it most resembled the black-breasted game fowl of to-day. Its native home was in great forests, deep jungles, and thickets; and where cultivation crept near those places it came out in small parties to the fields, and searched for food. Hunters in these forests observed in it the inclination to wake the day and sound the night bugle, just as do its descendants. Its voice was described in tone as exactly that of a bantam, but its crow was short, shrill, and of peculiar strained effect, as if the utterance hurt the throat of the bird. No doubt those fowl would have been frightened half to death to have heard the good full-throated roar of their Shanghai, Bramah, or Cochin-China descendants drawn out with full artistic effect. If there was nothing else to indicate the homes in which our breeds originated, those names would serve.

Wild hens nested in the grass, deposited from ten to twelve white eggs, and brooded when they finished laying, so that all the young arrived at the same time. This habit of the wild fowl, partridges, and quail is the basis of

our custom of saving eggs and setting a hen on a nestful. It is nature's way, and is best, in a natural state at least.

There is a gray jungle fowl in India that has even more of a peculiar broken crow; another species in Java, and the Cingalese jungle fowl of Ceylon is also of unusual voice. All of these will breed in captivity with domestic fowl, but their young are always sterile hybrids. Nature seems to keep each family distinct in this way, and yet it would seem that in the origin of species crossing was responsible for new forms. But there is a law that perhaps we have not yet learned fully.

I have been watching the efforts of Bob Burdette Black, a man greatly interested in nature study, to cross the golden pheasant with the common bantam in the hope of domesticating a beautiful bird resembling a pheasant on his premises. In his first attempt he placed the pheasant-bantam eggs in a common nest, and all of them spoiled. Then he bethought him that the pheasant brooded on the ground, and on the next trial he placed the eggs on earth. A large per cent hatched, and he used his usual methods with young chicks; but they all died. After repeated attempts he found a little brown bantam hen one morning with three young, and in disgust he turned them out to shift for themselves. They took to grass as ducks take to water, and all three lived, and grew finely, proving that something besides a cat was killed with care.

One of these chicks was the dark mother-color, two were beautiful gold with dark tail bands, wing and throat mottlings. All had pheasant legs, shape of body, and head. None had the red wattles, or the gay neck plumage. All had tails standing straight *back* instead of erect,

and decorated with the long feathers of the pheasant. Their sex could not be determined without killing them, but the tails seemed to indicate that they were nearest male birds. The dark one, which Mr. Black thought most likely to be a hen, strayed, and gave no clue to her habits. She wandered far over the premises, and along the river. Once she frightened me by slipping like a snake through deep grasses, where I lay hiding with a set camera. She came weaving toward me exactly as a monstrous snake, and that slender, dark head and neck shot into my view. One day Mr. Black found her food-hunting in perfect felicity with a flock of quail.

The golden birds which he thought nearest males were much more domestic. They staid with the chickens, and came regularly to food and water, and the enclosure of the park at night. They might have wandered through the surrounding wheat fields, meadows, and orchards as widely as their dark relative, had they chosen. When spring came they refused to mate, either with bantams or pheasants, and showed no signs of egg-laying, so we concluded they were hybrids. Then, to our amazement, one of the supposed males, the biggest, brightest one, having the longest tail, showed a disposition to *brood*. The bird was supplied with a nestful of pheasant-bantam eggs and brooded them faithfully.

I made a study of the nest, and another of the brooding bird, although the shadow from the top of the box hid the decorative tail feathers. Three days before time to hatch, and when we were pluming ourselves on what a "great picture" the pheasant-bantam would make when its long tail waved over its brood, came a terrific thunderstorm, which killed every chick. Before this the color,

warmth, and weight of the eggs, and at the last examination discernible motion, proved them lively. Then, as this was July, we fixed our hopes on the next season, but by that time the bird had roamed so much it showed no inclination to brood. All of these specimens are now living, hardy, and running at large around the premises, the gold ones perching with the poultry at night. They are three and one-half years old, and the plumage is the same as in the first year.

This is to me proof that all our domestic fowl are dependent upon insistent breeding along one line to produce different members in the same family; and not upon crossing of different parent stems. An infusion of new blood of the same kind makes a marked improvement in a family.

Every indication seems to point to the fact that these red jungle fowls were first caught, tamed, and bred in captivity in Burmah. Chinese traditions have it that they first imported fowls from the west 1400 B. C. In the book of Manu, dating from 1200 to 800 B. C., the use of wild fowl was permitted for food; but they had their suspicions of the tame ones, and prohibited their use, as if domestication might poison them.

From these countries fowl were imported to Greece, Italy, and crossed the Mediterranean to the Holy Land. Homer did not mention these birds, although in his writings a man named Cock may have derived his name from them. Nothing even slightly resembling them is found among the birds of symbol writing of Ancient Egypt. Pindar notes them slightly, and Aristophanes calls them a "Persian bird," which indicates that they worked their way west by importations. Aristotle did not write of

them, but in the times of Aristophanes they were well known, as is proven by this dialogue between Pisthetairus and Euelpides:

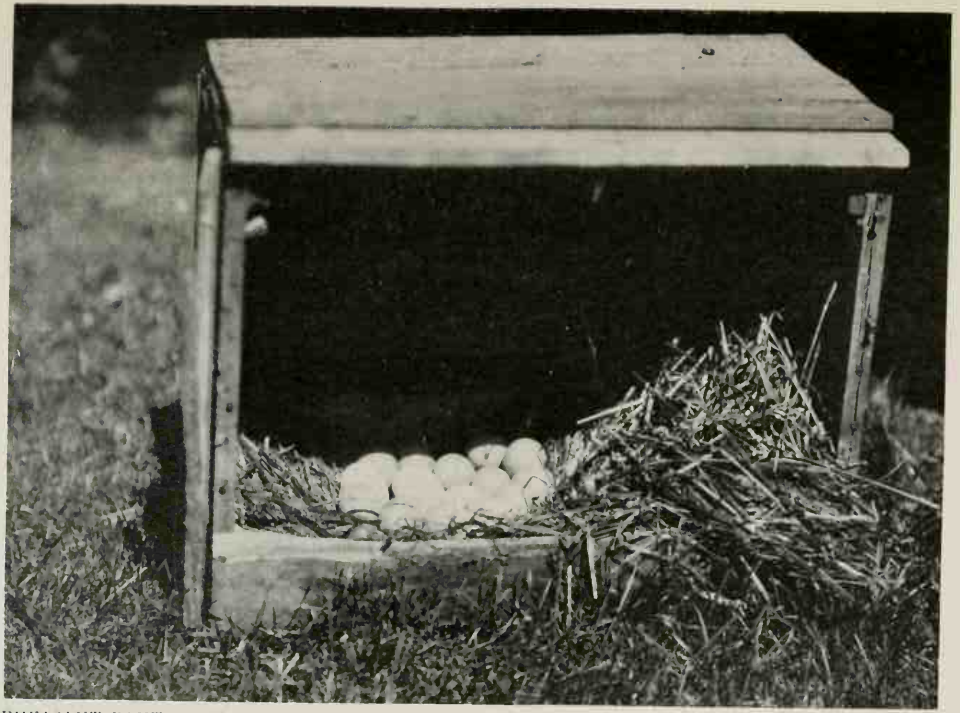
Pisthetairus—"Of this, therefore, we have many proofs, that, not the gods, but the birds, were rulers and kings over men in ancient times. For example, I will first point out the cock to you, how he was sovereign and ruler over the Persians, before all, before Darius, and Megabyzus. So that he is still called the Persian bird, from that his domain."

Euelpides—"On this account, then, even now, he only of the birds struts about with the turban erect on his head, like the great king."

Pisthetairus—"And so powerful was he, and great, and strong at that time, that still even now, on account of that power of his at that time, when he merely crows at dawn, all jump up to their work, braziers, potters, tanners, shoemakers, bathmen, corn factors, lyre-turners, and shield-makers: and they trudge off, having put on their shoes in the dark."

And again, in selecting a ruler for the city of the birds, Pisthetairus inquired, "Who, then, will command the Pelargicon of our city?" Epops replied, "A bird from our company, of the Persian race, which is said everywhere to be the most terrible, the chicken of Mars." Euelpides replied, "O master chicken! How fitted is the god to dwell upon the rocks!"

They were common in Italy in the days of Pliny, who was ten years old at the time of the Crucifixion. His history contains instructions for the feeding of chickens, mating, brooding, choosing eggs, the diseases of sick hens, and the remedies. He dwelt largely on the bravery



PHEASANT-BANTAM NEST

STRATTON-PORTER

Eggs similar to those from which pheasant-bantams were hatched, with three common eggs in contrast.

and knowledge of the cocks, calling them "sentinels and astronomers." He ended a tribute to their fighting powers with the statement that "the very lions (which of all wild beasts be most courageous) stand in fear and awe of them, and will not abide the sight of them." He gave an account of a barnyard fowl that spoke. It belonged to one Galerius, in the time of the consuls Lepidus and Catulus.

He recorded that the first man of Rome who devised a "coupe" to keep fowl in and "cram" them to fatness so that their meat would be of delicate color and fine flavor, was Lenius Strabo. He also told of an old law made by Caius Fannius, a consul of Rome, providing that no man should serve at his table more than one hen, and that a "runner only, and not fed up and crammed fat." But he said this law was evaded by feeding cocks and capons on a paste of meade soaked in milk, that made their flesh so fine and tender they could be eaten instead of hens.

He presaged the incubator by saying that eggs were hatched in manure beds in Egypt; that a man or woman might germinate eggs with the heat of the body, or that chickens could be produced by frequently turning eggs over a slow fire of chaff. He was of the opinion that if a brooding hen heard a hawk cry, her eggs would be marred. He recommended an iron nail under the straw of a nest as a remedy "against the spoiling of eggs by thunder." His writings of the choosing of eggs for setting, the methods of preserving them, and the general care of fowl, prove chickens to have been common enough in his time that their habits and care were well understood in Rome, although they were still so rare that they were protected by law.

The records of Babylon six and seven hundred years before Christ contain figures intended for fowl. They were well reproduced on marble carvings from Lycia six hundred years B. C. These drawings are either of the wild birds or of the tamed, before the erection of the tails, which have the droop of the wild estate. No one seems to know exactly when the bird assumed its present upright bearing and erect tail feathers.

We can only guess when chickens entered the Holy Land, but we know that they were imported. There is no mention of them that can be considered at all accurate in the Old Testament. In the first chapter of Genesis, Moses, in recording the history of creation, wrote: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." In the seventh chapter Noah was to take into the ark "of fowls of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep the seed alive upon the face of the earth." The birds mentioned as having been in the ark are doves and ravens. The same term is used repeatedly where it is expressly stated that the "fowl" were pigeons and doves.

David spoke of the "fowls of the heaven, which *sing* among the branches," and the singing proves they were not chickens. When he exhorted all "flying fowl" to praise the Lord, the *flying* precluded poultry. Chickens never were classed among birds of flight, even in their wild estate. In First Kings, in the enumeration of the long list of food required to furnish the table of Solomon for one day, there are mentioned "ten fat oxen," twenty oxen out of the pasture, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks and fallow deer and fatted fowl,"

these, as in previous and following instances, were doves and pigeons, or they might have been geese and ducks, for, while not abundant, they were found in small numbers, and very good food when tender with much fat.

In the New Testament I can find no mention of chickens save in the records of the life of Jesus. His use of them indicated that they were universally known as our domestic fowl of to-day. In one instance the translation reads "chickens," which I had thought a more recent word. Our record of time began with the birth of Christ, and the domestication of the bird seems so complete then, that it will be safe to place its importation into Galilee at about five or six hundred years previous by a rough guess; Italy knew them well at that time.

Then chickens were centuries nearer their origin than they are now and, no doubt, remained the same in color, form, and voice. So I think the crowing of the cocks of Galilee was similar to their wild progenitors in tone and volume. When scientists of the last few centuries take to breeding by selection of the finest, in an incredibly short time they produce different shape, color, and characteristics; but I doubt if much of the work had been done on chickens in Bible times. I may be mistaken about this, for the finest fancy pigeons in the world are bred there to-day, and it may be by men descended from pigeon and poultry breeders of times long past. There is to support the theory, that as early as Bible days men had tamed wild horses, asses, and wolves, and bred them down to war horses, beasts of burden, and sheep dogs. That a wolf should be the ancestor of a sheep dog seems a complete characteristic revolution for an original sheep killer.

When we read the admonition of Jesus to His followers, "Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning," we think of the long-drawn, lusty salute to dawn of our country and village cocks. But I believe the sound to have been shorter, shriller, and wilder, and it was earlier. It began at midnight for the first round, followed near two by a second salute, and a little after four began the regular full chorus which Aristophanes said sent laborers to their tasks.

Fowl are next mentioned when Peter assured Jesus that, though all others might be offended with Him, he would not; and Jesus, knowing the shallows of his nature, warned him, "Verily I say unto thee that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." What followed was painful, and a poor commentary on human nature. When Jesus was led away to His doom, Peter remained, and stole in among the servants of the high priest, and warmed by the fire. A maid came by and accused him of having been among the followers of Jesus, and he denied it, saying, "I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. He went out into the porch, and the cock crew." Again the maid accused him, and Peter grew more emphatic. Then the men around reminded him that his speech was Galilean, and he began to curse and swear, and denied Christ utterly. And again the cock crew. I am very sure it was a wild, shrill, and soul-stirring sound, for then Peter remembered, and sat down, and wept. I am sorry that our brave and useful domestic bird had to play even an unconscious part in the world's greatest tragedy; but the

bird was unconscious, and therefore came off well beside the weak, dishonored man.

The hen figured in happier history, and in one of the most expansive and poetic expressions of Jesus. She must have been thoroughly domesticated by that time, and common with her brood around her all along Canaan ways, and the exquisite picture of motherhood she made had been observed carefully. In reproving Jerusalem, the Master cried out:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets,
And stonest them that are sent unto her!
How often would I have gathered thy children
together,
Even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her
wings,
And ye would not!"

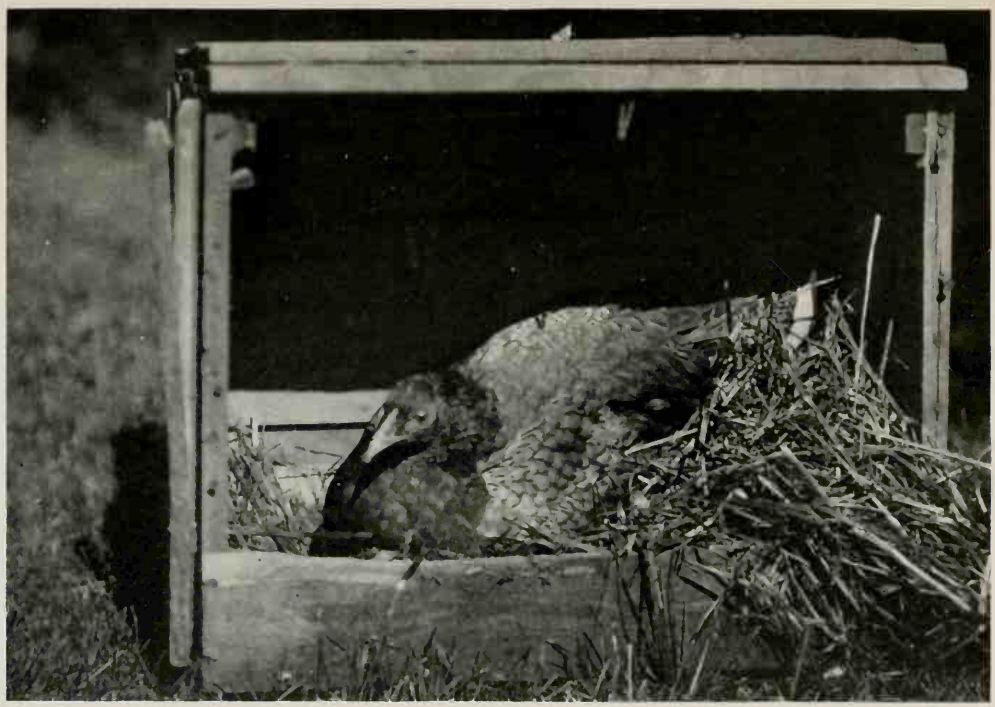
In recording the history of the same scene, Matthew used the words, "Even as a hen gathereth her *chickens* under her wings, and ye would not!"

I am a daughter of an ordained minister of the Lord, and all my early life I was surrounded by an atmosphere of worship, and reverence for all things "whatsoever are pure, holy, and right." Yet I never laid hold on Bible history or felt its people and places a *personal possession* until I studied it scientifically for the material of this book. To make plain which birds were used, and their appropriateness to the text, I was compelled to have a clear understanding of the *time*, *place*, and *people*. In gaining this I found what I lacked in Bible teaching. I did not know places and people; I knew only the spiritual side, most of which is complex for well-informed adults, and beyond the comprehension of children entirely. The

young try to have faith and believe because they are told they should; but in the end their faith seems to fade, and they are not the stout believers on which the foundations of a Church should rest.

With all deference I would make this suggestion to ministers and Sabbath-school teachers: Root and ground your audiences and pupils in the geography of Bible lands, in the time of the world's history, in the animals, in the flowers, in the birds, in the customs, and in the people. Make them fully understand that it was a real place, filled with the most interesting of real things. Put away the spiritual side of the Bible for a time, that children especially can not grasp, and give them proper *foundation* on which to build. Teach them the disposition and character of each man from what he wrote and his manner of expression. Depict his surroundings, what he wore, ate, and saw. These are the things in which people are interested concerning living writers; and after all the Bible is only a record of the life and religious traditions of a past age, by a number of different men. To-day, if we like what a man writes, we want to meet him, to know where and how he lives, his habits and surroundings, and many things, little of our affair, no doubt, but still it is human nature to want to know. After all, a man's brain-work is *himself*, and if he makes it public he must expect in a measure to become public also.

No child can grasp the idea of the Trinity, of Transfiguration, or the Resurrection; but they can learn trees, flowers, birds, exquisite poems, and people. Then, with maturity, the *spiritual* side of the question will develop itself. Victor Hugo expressed my thought perfectly when he wrote: "The religious fact is not the Church; it



BROODING PHEASANT-BANTAM STRATTON-PORTER

The pheasant-bantam which persisted in brooding.

is the opening of the rose; it is the breaking of the dawn; it is the nesting of the bird. The religious fact is nature, holy and eternal." Much Bible teaching is at fault in this. It sets children following forms they do not understand, as the sacrament; and trying to make realities out of things they can not comprehend, as the Godhead. Get them to grasp firmly what they can realize, and as their brain develops, so will spiritual insight.

Studying the methods of Jesus, a simple man of Galilee, without the educational opportunities of Moses, David, or Isaiah, yet the Founder of the world's greatest religion, I have tried to learn wherein lay His grip and His mighty power with the people of His time and the millions yet to be born. I find it lies in His extreme simplicity and clearness. It lies in His ability to use nature effectively: to select examples for illustration which needed no explanation, for every one knew they proved themselves. He led people for the most part as unassuming as Himself, and His wonderful power lay in the fact that He taught them within the bounds of their comprehension. Now can not *you* take a hint, and follow His methods literally? Lead your flocks and scholars across the fields, through the valleys and forests, and teach them the great and awful marvel of nature; and you will find them rooted and grounded in unshakable *belief in the Almighty* before you realize it.

So much has been taught of the spirit, and so little of matter, that children do not grasp the personality of Jesus himself. Recently a hard-riding, football, tennis-playing boy of fourteen said to his mother, "I wish the law would compel people to quit making pictures of Jesus." Properly shocked, the mother asked why.

"Well," argued the boy, "none were made while He lived. They are not real portraits. They are just somebody's *idea*, and I think Jesus is too sacred to put into a picture unless it is a *real likeness*." Further talk developed the boy's thought. It was his idea that the man who had the power to make people drop their work and follow Him in a flock, who had the courage to brave storms and horrible diseases and go into Jerusalem when He knew He would be crucified, did not have a face like a woman, and he did not believe His pictures were true likenesses. No other man of His race, or anywhere near His time, looked anything like these pictures of Jesus, and he thought Him a "lot more of a man." He wished "they would burn all the fancy pictures in existence, and if there were no real portraits, find a fellow a *true description*, and let him think out his own picture."

In searching for the material of this chapter, the difference between the methods of Jesus and that of ministers of to-day has been so marked that these thoughts have come to me, and essentially I believe they are right. For the benefit of this manly little fellow, and all others in like perplexity, I will quote in this chapter, devoted to birds mentioned by Jesus alone, the personal description of Him submitted to the Roman senate by Publius Lentulus, who was sent an especial envoy to Judea to watch and report what he saw:

"He is a man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholder must love and fear. His hair is the color of a chestnut full ripe, plain to the ears, hence downward more orient, curling, and waving about the shoulders. In the midst

of His forehead is a stream or partition in his hair, after the manner of the Nazarites. His forehead is plain and very delicate. His face is without spot or wrinkle, and beautiful with a lovely red color. His nose and mouth so marked as can not be described. His beard is thick, in color like His hair, and not over long. His look mature, but innocent. His eyes gray, quick, and clear. In reproving He is terrible, in admonishing courteous, and fair spoken; pleasant in conversation, mixed with gravity. It is not recorded that any have seen Him laugh, but many have seen Him weep. His proportion of body is most excellent; His hands and arms delightful to behold."

The boy is right. The accepted pictures of Jesus are not *true*. They bring to mind a rather frail, very dark man, with a sad woman's face. This word picture, brought from Judea to Rome by a critical unbeliever, represented a rather tall man of light complexion, gray eyes, almost red hair and beard, and despite great beauty His eyes were "quick," there were things in His face to "fear," and He could be "terrible." *This* picture makes you believe He could and would do the things He did. It makes for you a vision of a flesh-and-blood man who for years lived an outdoor life of constant travel, unprotected from almost tropical sun and wind. A man with physical force to drive the money-changers from the temple, with the courage to face disease and death, and with the intellect to preach the Sermon on the Mount and pray the Lord's Prayer. A man who could lead other men like flocking sheep across hill and valley, over water and plain, while He pointed out how the Almighty illustrates human life by the tiny grain of mustard-seed, flower,

rock, wind, wave, animal, and bird. In this picture I materialize a physical man, and I can see His bright face, pain-swept, as He stretched out His arms and cried:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
How often would I have gathered thy children
together,
Even as a hen gathereth her chickens under
her wings,
And ye would not."

THE HAWK

"Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom?
And stretch her wings toward the south?"

—Job.

HAWK STRATTON-PORTER

A hawk could sail the length of the Holy Land many times in a day.

Chapter X

THE HAWK

"*Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom?*" was one of the confounding questions hurled at Job in his great thirty-ninth chapter, that contains so much natural history. His reply was not ready, and nearly six thousand years later the question remains unanswered. The greatest thing any of us have learned concerning the flight of the hawk, or any bird, is that it depends on balance. To mount above cloud, to soar, to sail, to poise hanging in air as does the hawk, is possible only when the bird balances perfectly. Two primary feathers lost from the tip of one wing, and these powers of flight are gone. How many ages and what slowly evolving chains of circumstances were required to lift a serpent from the sea, cover it with great feathers, and set it sailing out of the range of our vision, only the Almighty can tell: Job knew no more about it than we.

Many members of any one of two families might have been intended by this question. If it referred to the wonderful power of flight of the hawk, how she stretched her wings toward the south, and sailed directly into the eye of the sun until men could not follow her for blinding their vision, it might have meant any great-winged hawk of strong flight. Birds such as we think of when we remember Cooper's hawk, or any relative of its size.

But if "stretching her wings toward the south" re-

ferred to migration, then we must think of the smaller hawks, such as we include in the falcon family, because these are birds which retired to the south for the winter season, in Bible lands. The large hawks were all the year residents.

Of these there seemed to be almost as many families as we have to-day, but the Hebrews had a way of covering many members of a species with one small word which expressed a characteristic of all. For illustration, "glede" seems to refer to a bird of especially keen vision. That might be an eagle, hawk, or vulture, any or all of which have sight past our conception; but of them all a certain species of hawk is supposed to have the sharpest eyes, so our translators have called that branch of the hawk family the "glede."

In Leviticus and Deuteronomy the word "ayah" is translated hawk, and undoubtedly refers to the same bird we call a hawk to-day. The fact that even a small portion of their food is carrion explains why Moses found them unfit to eat, even every species he names, and all of them "after their kind." With us any bird that is large enough to carry off a small chicken is a chicken hawk, regardless of family. Any bird that has a hawk-like appearance is a hawk, no matter what it is doing. The little dusky falcon that perches on a telephone wire and sweeps the meadows for grasshoppers, and the great birds of twenty-seven inches length that soar beyond sight, are hawks; and everything of hawklike appearance between these two extremes is the same. So we are in no position to criticise the vagueness of the Biblical mention of any bird.

Aristotle said two startling things of these birds:

that they changed their method of hunting, and did not seize their prey in the same manner in summer as they did in winter; also that they never ate the heart of their victim. Pliny indorsed this last statement. He said, "Hawks are divided into sundry and distinct kinds, by their greediness more or less, and their manner in chase and preying."

All over Palestine great hawks were common, the largest of them over two feet in length, with flat heads, hooked beaks, strong, sharp talons, eyes with the keenest, most comprehensive look of any living bird, and long, pointed wings, on which they could sail the length and breadth of the Holy Land several times a day. It is a remarkable fact that you will see the birds of cloud spaces sailing and soaring only in clear weather, which does not mean that they are flying on damp, rainy days, and you can not see them; but that mist interferes with their vision, and they are hidden hungry and silent, waiting for the skies to clear so that they can take wing and search for food. In flight they have a habit of steering with their tails, which furnished primitive man with his idea for putting a rudder on his boat.

The glede and the great hawk were more like the eagles in choosing locations. They did not select mountain tops, but they did go to the mountains, building on Carmel, and all over the hills of Galilee. They preyed upon young game birds because of their size, moles, rats, mice, frogs, and were especial enemies to pigeons and doves, that were numerous everywhere.

They built in the great trees, and on the crags of the mountains, big, coarse nests of sticks and twigs, and carried most of the food alive which they gave to their young. I have seen hawks eat carrion, but daintily and

almost never in comparison with the amount of living prey they take. Once in a great while they secure something we wish they had not, but as a rule all food carried to the nest of a hawk is something very good for the welfare of man to have removed.

They followed traveling and camping Bedouins, were plentiful near Beersheba, and congregated in great numbers in the wilderness west of the Dead Sea for their season of rest. On wing in cloud spaces they duplicated the graceful flight of the eagle, and could not be told from it at long range, so similar were they in form and coloration. The kite "ayah," which is a hawk having wonderful keenness and penetration of sight, is mentioned in the abomination lists in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. It is also spoken of when Isaiah predicted the destruction of Edom. "There shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate."

With the Hebrews "netz" seemed to refer to small hawks that migrated, and it appeals to me that their kestrel corresponded most nearly with our falcon family. They are smaller, brighter of coloring, keep nearer the earth, and in all my experience eat mice, insects, and small birds, but never carrion. All along the rocky shores of the Jordan, all through the desolate crevices of the Dead Sea, over the ruins of deserted cities, whose whole population at times was wiped out in fierce tribal wars, in temples and mosques, over cultivated fields and fruitful gardens along the coast, flocked the kestrels.

From the greatest to the smallest, we have a dozen different families; no doubt Bible lands knew as many, or even more, for that country was infinitely better suited to their habits and wants than ours. While great num-

PAIR FALCONS STRATTON-PORTER

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth
And which the falcon's eye hath not seen."

bers of the species frequented the wilderness, the edges of the desert, and the mountains, the insect eaters followed cultivated fields and gardens, growing more friendly with man and with each other.

One kestrel, which the Arabs always distinguished from the others, was small and of brilliant color. It summered with them, and wintered in Africa. Because it was absent half the year is no doubt the reason it was first especially noticed. It was friendly to its kind and to men, and, as it ate insects mostly, was welcomed into grain fields, gardens, all around villages, and the suburbs of cities. It was distinguished by its white claws, coloring, size, and habits.

It nested in hollow trees, bringing off larger broods than the great hawks, and feeding almost entirely on grasshoppers, moths, and palmerworms. Occasionally it helped itself to a sparrow, and its larger relatives near the fruit orchards and olive yards took a dove or pigeon; but as men used so many of these for food and sacrifice, it seems no more than fair that the birds should have their share also. The Revised Version changes the vulture to the falcon in the description of a mine in the twenty-eighth chapter of Job. I do not agree with the change. The falcons have keen eyes, as do all hawks and eagles; but I always have thought of the vulture in connection with this passage, and believe it to be the bird intended.

The description of the appearance and habit of these kestrels makes me sure they were similar to our beautiful and interesting little dusky falcon, that is of the same location, habit, and color description. In all time these birds have been very friendly with man, and if taken from a nest and trained a little, will become thoroughly

domesticated, and make beautiful and very intelligent pets. These are the birds that were educated for the sport of hawking in early England. They rode to the field on the wrist or saddle-pommel of the owner, and were released at the sight of pigeon, dove, lark, or any bird they were capable of taking; the sport being to watch the capture and recovery of the wild bird. Sometimes two hawks were released to pursue the prey, and the owners made wagers as to whose bird would win.

I know one falcon of this family taken from a nest and raised by hand, that became perfectly tame from the beginning, and now flies and retrieves to order and perches on the head of a hunting dog with no more concern than its relatives, flying all around and sitting on the dead limb of any tree. There are touches of white and black on its plumage, a bright rusty red on its crown and wings, and strong steel blue in shadings over it. The feet and beak are white, and its soft eyes have that wonderful look of intelligence of all hawks.

Because we have trained the crow, and become so well acquainted with him, we usually credit him with having the most highly developed brain of any bird. But I think, from the appearance of large wisdom to be found in the face and eyes of a hawk, that if we had spent one-half the time studying and developing it that we have the crow, we should find that this bird would respond to teaching much quicker, and be far more intelligent than the crow. There is something in the face of a great hawk seen at close range of which, I confess, I stand in awe.

To me these birds are typical of the wonder and majesty of the Almighty. Who knows what they see when they range beyond our vision? Who knows what

they feel when they soar in cloud spaces? By whose wisdom do they fly, if not by the wisdom of the Almighty? Then, who are we, and who gave us power to tamper with the scheme of creation? And when will we learn that we will pay dearly if we do?

Did you ever stop to consider that it is invariably the weakling of a flock that a hawk secures? There is almost always an alarm from some source, and the strongest make for cover and escape; so if the hawk captures any prey, it is the weak and helpless. Recently I was told by Gilbert Pearson, who knows as much as any other one man concerning the sea and coast birds, that hawks were preying upon the pheasant hatcheries of a certain producer of these birds. He furnished arms and ammunition, and offered a reward for hawk scalps in his community. One season saw the last of the great birds come swirling to earth. The next, no hawks visited the location. By the third year the weakling pheasants that the hawks would have carried away had dragged out a sickly existence, bred, and intermingled with the strong birds. The pest came, and by the thousand sick and well died together, until the man saw his error. The last I heard of him he was praying for some good, strong hawks to come his way and restore the force of the balance of nature.

There is an old proverb, "Let well enough alone," that is good to apply in this case. Because a hawk takes a few young chickens, ducks, turkeys, or doves, a farmer ruthlessly will shoot every hawklike bird in range, and thus in his ignorance he will destroy birds that catch fifty moles and mice from his fields to every chicken they take from the orchard. There is no way in which to

estimate the number of grasshoppers, locusts, and insect plagues that a half dozen falcon families will carry from a grain field or meadow to a brood of young in a season; but because they appear like hawks they, too, are killed.

The hawk has the most comprehensive bird face I know. It is not so ferocious as the eagle, and is far more intelligent. With its deep-set eyes and overshadowing brow the eagle appears inexorable, a perfect picture of savagery. Larger eyes, more prominently set, give to the face of the hawk less ferocity and more intelligence. The longer I study hawk faces and history, the more firmly I become convinced that these birds fly by the wisdom of the Almighty, and we suffer the penalty if we interfere.

QUAIL AND PARTRIDGE

"*They asked, and he brought quails,*
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven."

—David.

"*As the decoy partridge in a cage,*
So is the heart of a proud man."

—Ecclesiasticus.

QUAIL

STRATTON-PORTER

"At even the quails came up."

Chapter XI

QUAIL AND PARTRIDGE

Quails were first mentioned by Moses in the Bible, in the history of the Exodus. After the Hebrews had crossed the Red Sea, and were on their way toward the wilderness of Sinai, they complained because of scarcity of food. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass at even that the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the Children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, What is it? For they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

David, in recording the flight of Israel in his poetic strain, touched upon this same incident; and he told it like the true poet he was.

"He spread a cloud for a covering;
And fire to give them light in the night.
They asked, and He brought quails,
And satisfied them with the bread of Heaven.
He opened the rock, and waters gushed out,
They ran in the dry places like a river."

Again, toward the end of the journey, the people tired of the manna, and complained because they were hungry for the fish, cucumbers, melons, onions, leeks, and garlic of Egypt. Once more Providence came to their rescue in this manner.

"And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, about a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and about two cubits above the face of the earth. And the people rose up all that day, and all the night, and all the next day, and gathered up the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp."

Commentators have spent much time trying to prove that this provision of the Lord was flying fish, because they came from the sea; and again that they were some large insects, like locusts, or some birds ranging anywhere from grouse to stork. Yet the text is so much easier, clearer, and more sensible as it stands. In the first place the Hebrew "selav" means "to be fat," which accurately describes the condition of the quail at the time of migration. This bird was considered the plumpest, most juicy morsel of its species for food in Bible lands. None of the alternatives mentioned were very good to eat, except the grouse, and that was not nearly so delicious as the quail. Again, the time was early spring, about our April, and the quail were migratory birds. They not only came up from Africa, and spread like clouds over the lands of Bible history; but they crossed the sea. Pliny tells of them coming into Italy in great numbers, and so wearied with their long flight, that,

sighting a ship, they would settle upon it so thickly as to sink it.

There is no question but this is true. Quails were birds of the earth. They built on the ground, and averaged sixteen young to the nest. If even half of a brood escaped, they soon multiplied around the edges of the deserts in Africa in such numbers as easily to form clouds. They were plump, heavy birds, and never attempted high flight. In migration they always waited until the wind was blowing in the direction they wished to travel. Even with this help they became so exhausted in crossing water that they always stopped on any island to rest.

Now compare these scientific facts with the text. Here was the camp of Israel, lying in the Sinai Peninsula. It was spring, and the birds were in migration. The quail in their heavy, low flight followed up the Red Sea until they came to the point of the peninsula. Here they selected the narrowest place, and when the wind was in the right direction they crossed with it. Not far from the coast they flew over the camp fires of the Israelites, which completely bewildered them, and they began to fall in confused thousands all over and around the camp. Then the Israelites arose and killed for each soul of the camp a certain number, and spread them out in the hot desert sun to dry; just as Herodotus tells us the Egyptians always have done. In this instance no miracle was needed. The workings of natural, every-day laws supplied the food received in the easiest way imaginable.

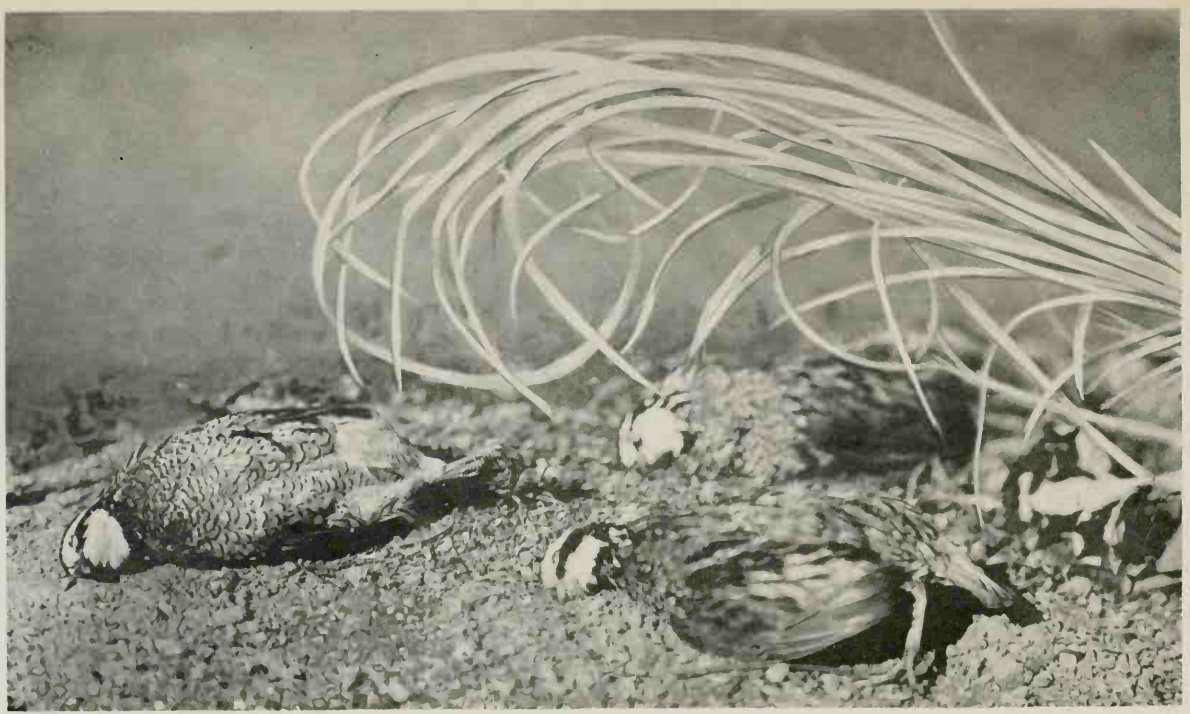
David in time reached this incident also, and from his never-failing fountain of poesy flowed this account of it:

> "Man did eat the bread of the Mighty:
> He sent them meat to the full.

He caused the east wind to blow in the Heaven:
And by His power guided the south wind.
He rained flesh also upon them as dust,
And winged fowl as the sand of the seas:
And He let it fall in the midst of their camp,
Round about their habitations."

The latest version of the Bible in three different passages that I find, always in comparison, mentions the partridge, which is a near relative of the quail. The partridges were a little larger than the quail, in one instance more brightly colored, but the plumage was not so cut with pencilings, and the backs of all were very much like the browns, tans, and grays of earth. They were not of such juicy, finely flavored flesh to eat as quail, although all of them were used for food.

Their habits were so similar that a description of one member of any family would answer very well for the whole. They nested on the ground, laid from sixteen to twenty eggs, and left the nest with the young, that all emerged at once, as soon as the down was dry. Then they began life around the edges of the desert, in the wilderness, on the high hills, and sides of the mountains. Our quails and partridges are relatives of these birds of Bible lands, differing slightly in markings and in their eggs. Ours lay a white egg; theirs, a creamy egg with heavy, dark-brown mottlings. Also our birds, the quail especially, are much tamer, and nest near the borders of grain fields, in orchards, and meadows. There are many instances in my experience with these birds when I was sure they chose a location close to a path, by a roadside, or especially near a power-house, when I felt they were availing themselves of the protection they would receive from



QUAILS STRATTON-PORTER

"They asked, and He brought quails."

the presence of man near their nests, to shield them from snakes, hawks, and animals. These Oriental birds were the wildest things imaginable. They were splendid runners. The young, with down scarcely dry, would evade a man, and the old birds, with flashing legs and earth-colored backs, often escaped where they had a little shelter and ran on a level.

David, in his dialogue with Saul, recorded in First Samuel, used an expression that proved, if he had not been partridge hunting himself, he had seen these birds taken. He knew how similar to the earth and dry leaves they were in color, how swiftly they could run, how elusively they could dodge, and how motionless they could squat beside something that afforded them protective coloration, even when the human hand or foot was within a few inches of them. So he said to Saul, "The king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains." Yet on the mountains the partridges were at a disadvantage, and were easier to take with the sticks that were especially made to throw at birds, than in the fields.

Pliny wrote, in a quite complete history of the partridge, how it would slip from its nest, pretending a broken wing, and toll a man from its location. This is true to the characteristics of the bird, if only he had quit with truth; but he added that after escaping it would lie on its back, and with its feet hold a clod above itself for cover. I am ready to affirm that no partridge ever did this. In some way he must have confused this bird with the species of hawks and owls that lie on their backs to fight, so that at the same time they can use feet, beak, and wing butts effectively, and protect the back as well.

The largest number of these birds could be taken at migration times with what were called "throw sticks." After the birds were nesting or raising young, the greatest havoc could be wrought among them with nets or by using a bird of the species as a decoy, as is described in the first chapter of this book. It is this decoy method of taking birds which is used in comparison in Ecclesiasticus:

> "As a decoy partridge in a cage,
> So is the heart of a proud man."

The other reference to partridges used to cause commentators much trouble, because the old version read, "As the partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." That was explained in several different ways, all of which neglected the obvious fact that the eggs of the partridge are splendid food; indeed, no other equals them. I am sorry that I know so well, but when I was a child no one ever heard of bird protection. We instinctively shielded songsters and little helpless creatures, but quail and partridges were very numerous, and we ate both the birds and eggs. When we found a nest, with a long stick we always raked out one egg, and if it had not been brooded yet, we ate those remaining. No other egg I ever tasted nearly equals them. But we did not discover this ourselves. The knowledge of the delicacy of quail eggs came across the sea with our ancestors, and they learned it from the south of Europe, and these lands had it from Africa, the home of the quail. So that passage merely means that a partridge sits on a large nestful

of eggs while she deposits them, but she is not always allowed to brood, and raise her young, because her eggs disappear. If they escape man, there are all the native egg-eaters of the wild.

The new version of this text accepts as correct one of the explanations which was offered to make clear the first form of these lines, "that the partridge hatched the eggs of other birds, and so gathered young which she had not brought forth." So the lines are made to read, "As the partridge hath gathered young which she hath not brought forth, so is he that gathereth riches and not by right."

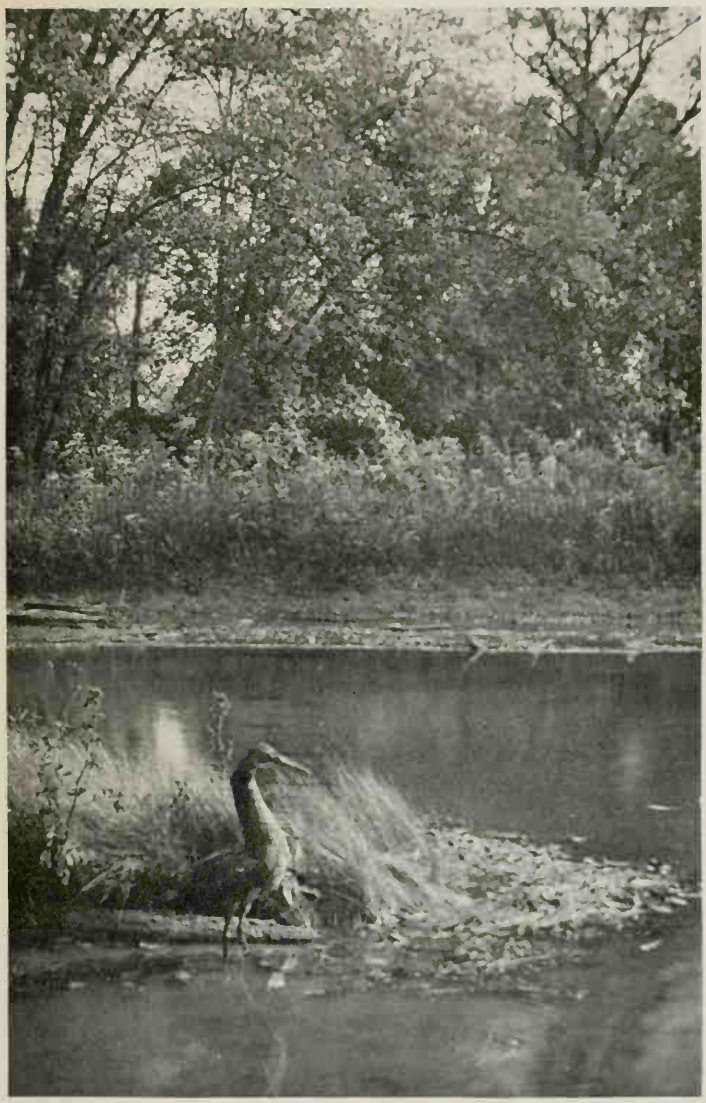
I know that what we call domestic fowl will brood upon any egg that is placed under them: pea hen, duck, goose, turkey, and once I set a hen on chicken hawk eggs. Also wild birds brood for the cuckoo and the cowbird, but I have had experience with thousands of bird nests and brooding birds, and never yet have I found the egg of any other in the nest of a partridge. It is almost an impossibility. These birds build on the ground, in a tuft of grass, and deposit one egg each day until they have finished. With each egg they *cover* the nest very securely, and *leave* it until they are ready to brood, and then they sit closely, the male taking the place of the female while she goes each day for food and drink.

There is just one possibility that this new version is right. Where these birds are so numerous as they were in Bible lands, and the parents were leaving the nest followed by from sixteen to twenty young, it appears very plausible that broods frequently might meet and intermingle, and the young become confused and follow the wrong mother. In this manner a partridge could

"gather" several young she "had not brought forth;" for the little birds are identical, and the old ones also. Thus stragglers of a brood might possibly become tired, and attach themselves to the next family coming their way when they were *very young*. When a little older, the nestlings distinguished the voice of the mother, for these birds had a melodious cry or whistle, as have our own. Not similar notes, but mellow, clear, sweet-toned calls.

THE BITTERN

"*I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water.*"—ISAIAH.



BITTERN STRATTON-PORTER

"A possession for the bittern."

Chapter XII

THE BITTERN

"It is impossible for those who have not heard its evening call to gain an adequate idea of its solemnity. It is like the interrupted bellowing of a bull, but hollower and louder, and is heard at a mile's distance, as if issuing from some formidable being that resided at the bottom of the waters. This is the bittern, whose windpipe is fitted to produce the sound for which it is remarkable; the lower part of it dividing into the lungs, being supplied with a thin, loose membrane, that can be filled with a large body of air and exploded at pleasure."—*Nutall.*

"Its strange, booming note, disturbing the stillness of the night, gives an idea of desolation which nothing but the wail of the hyena can equal."—*Tristram.*

The bittern boomed its way into Bible history as a horrible example. When prophets such as Isaiah and Zephaniah almost had exhausted their imagination, they finished with the bellow of a bittern. Some translators have thought from the text that an animal was intended, but there is no question with me but it was this very bird, since it was suggestive of a "formidable being that resided at the bottom of the waters" to one ornithologist two thousand years after the prophet's time, and "the wail of a hyena" to another. That the translation of "bittern" be changed to "porcupine" or "hedgehog," as suggested by some commentators, is absurd, since these

animals live in dry places, and not in pools of water; they do not "lift up their voices," they do not perch on wood, and there is no reason why they should be mentioned in connection with birds whose names undoubtedly are correctly translated.

The old version of the Bible renders "kippod," a creature inhabiting waste and desert places, as "bittern." Modern students seem to have confounded this with "kunfod," the hedgehog or porcupine. Here I am stoutly for the old version, on natural history grounds. The porcupine in no degree answers the purpose of Isaiah or Zephaniah. It makes no particular sound, and would add no terror to any picture of desolation, which is the purpose for which both these writers used the bittern. So in this case I prefer to quote the old version.

Seven hundred and twelve years before the time of Christ, Isaiah, in prophesying the fall of Babylon, said: "For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and the pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."

Later in his writings Isaiah assured Israel that the Lord yet would choose them for His people. He wrote, "And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve." He told Babylon that its music should cease, its pomp be brought to the grave, that worms should devour it, and that it should be as a carcass trodden under foot.

Then he prophesied how God would avenge His

Church. "It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof into burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day, the smoke thereof shall go up forever, from generation to generation it shall lie waste, and none shall pass through it forever and forever." It really seems as if this would be sufficient punishment for almost anything, but Isaiah evidently felt that it could be drawn stronger, for, continuing the same, he added, "But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owls also, and the ravens shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the lines of emptiness, and the stones of confusion."

The only excuse for putting the bittern into this company, or using it for this purpose, lies in its voice; since it is a clean, well-mannered, beautiful bird, handsomely plumaged, and it was once considered a great delicacy for food. Whether taste has changed, or the bird, I do not know, but it is not eaten by us. It was frequent all over Africa, and in India, and is old as history. All the way down time since the prophets used it to frighten people, the remarkable thing concerning it has been its vocal attainments, which are peculiar and like those of no other feathered creature. And aside from its voice it is such a nice bird, too!

Our bitterns are so similar to those that abounded in the marshes of Syria and in the swamps of the Tigris that the difference is not worth discussion. The birds are practically the same in voice and habit; ours is not quite so light in color, theirs being more of a buff.

They were members of the heron family, and homed

in the swamps and marshes of the Tigris and throughout the Holy Land. They were twenty-seven inches long, had a wing-spread of forty, and a four-inch bill. Their habits were partly nocturnal, but not so completely as supposed by early writers, for Audubon said of our bitterns, "In more than half a dozen instances I have surprised them in the act of procuring food in the middle of the day, when the sun was shining brightly." I have done more than that, for I have taken their pictures in the same circumstances.

They were very beautiful, their plumage made up of many shades of tans and browns, that were always pleasing and harmonious, and they had a touch of black as a distinctive marking. The darkest colors were on the wings, back, and tail; the lightest on the breast. The groundwork of this color was a deep, warm cream; the feathers being so penciled in darker brownish color as to resemble stripes. The light stripe was of the cream color, nearly a fourth of an inch in width; the dark stripe of the same, but definitely penciled in browns. The black markings began in a line at the corners of the mouth, extended under the eyes, and met at the back of the neck. Owing to their nocturnal habits, the eyes were noticeably large for the size of the bird. Their beaks and feet had lively color. The upper beak was dark-brown, shading to ivory at the tip, the under much shaded with yellow, green, and red. The feet were pale-green, elegantly shaped, with long, slender toes.

Their internal composition had two peculiarities. The intestines were so small as to be marvelous; and the unusual membrane in the lungs which was responsible for their appearance in the Bible, and much amusing literature. Their diet was frogs and marsh worms, that must

have been very well ground and assimilated in the crop, or they never could have passed through the tiny intestines.

They nested beside the water in the rushes and grasses, and their eggs were pale-brown. They were not a friendly bird, and took wing on sight unless protecting a nest and young. They did not fly well near the earth, but gained some height by circling before they made a long flight. They were beautiful waders, disdaining to hurry, but slowly and deliberately lifted each foot and carefully placed it. They evinced a pride in their handsome plumage by much dressing of it, and the care they used when entering filthy water.

The bittern was one of the first birds recorded in history, and its vocal attainments received prompt attention. Pliny wrote of a bird that bellowed like oxen, and for this reason was called "Taurus." Other mediæval writers referred to it as Botaurus, which name still clings to it in ornithology. Aristotle said that the bittern was originally called "ocnus," and that this name "indicates a very idle disposition." He added that "it is said in fables to have been a slave originally." Perhaps it was overworked in bondage, and is now taking a few centuries of needed rest, so it is deliberate and stately in its movements.

Wherever it located in the history of the world, it boomed or bellowed, and a new name sprang up to give it local designation. The tribal call of our bitterns, so nearly as I can express it in a word, is "Couk," or "Kouk," and so closely resembles the stroke of an ax on the head of a deeply driven stake that in the New England States they call it the "Stake Driver."

In my locality it is the "Thunder Pumper." Hear-

ing the bittern's cry among the tall grasses, and seeing it thrusting its long bill into the muck for worms, people concluded that it produced this call by pushing its bill into the mud and sucking water. An "oldest inhabitant" once explained to me that this bird was supplied with an extra straight intestine running straight through its anatomy. That it thrust its bill into any small puddle, pumped off the water, and then picked out the worms. The cry made the "thunder," and the sucking of the water was the "pumping," hence the name. So keen an observer as Thoreau half believed this, for he never recorded sighting a bittern, but he also told of creeping up to see if he could catch it in the act of sucking water to produce its cry.

He could have shot a bird easily, dissected it, and found out, but he was the man who exclaimed passionately, "I do not wish to know the length of the intestines of any bird!" Neither do I; and it is a certainty that I never will if I have to kill the bird to learn. Enough of that work to form all the records needed had been done before the birth of any one now living.

So the bittern owes its appearance in the Bible wholly to its voice. I can give no better description of it than that quoted in the beginning. It is not like any other bird note. It gives ground for a contention that sound is the most effective of the senses. After these prophets of old had piled agony to the extent of brimstone dust, and rivers of pitch; after they had drawn with all their powers a picture for the imagination, as a finishing touch they added sound. When their scene of desolation was complete as they could paint it, they selected this bird, and they hesitated in saying whether it was bird

or beast, and set it filling the night with its mournful echoes. Devastation to the sight was made complete by adding sounds of horror.

Isaiah was not alone in his conception of a scene of desolation. Over a hundred years later Zephaniah very closely paralleled him: "And He will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, and all of the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows, desolation shall be in the thresholds, for He shall uncover the cedar works."

Here is even a more vivid picture, because it seems nearer within the bounds of our comprehension. Land and rivers of pitch and brimstone dust are difficult to imagine, because they are beyond our experience. But we know how a cyclone can sweep by, and tear off roofs, and uncover the interior of homes. We know that land can become so dry that animals and wild beasts will lie down to die. But we do not know just what it would mean to see this thing, and to hear the voice of the bittern in its mournful bellow among the ruins in the night time. It was evidently the intention of the prophets to paint so dire a picture that no one would care to see it.

This quotation is used by some in an effort to prove that the bittern could not have been intended because it is a water bird, and Nineveh was to be made dry. But they forget that the marshes of the Tigris lay very near, and that in the stillness of night the voice of the bittern would resound through the ruins in its most horrible form, and easily could have been heard a half mile beyond. Moreover, the creature here specified was to "sing," and it was

to "lodge" on the "upper lintels," which were the top timbers of the doors and windows.

There seems to be a great gulf between humanity and the birds concerning melody. Here were Isaiah and Zephaniah using the voice of the bittern to complete a scene specially depicted to inspire horror. Such pictures were intended literally to frighten people. The bittern has not so very much to say in this world, except when courting a mate and raising a brood. This makes it all too evident that the notes on which the prophets were relying to give the last twist of horror to their pictures of desolation were the *love songs* of the bird.

When a bittern left its marshy haunts and began to "sing in the windows" of a ruin at night, you may be very sure that it was lonely, and calling with all the power of its far-reaching voice for a mate. It is unfortunate for it that the notes uttered happen to be those which we associate with desolation and heartbreak.

I am quite sure that the bird would alter its voice if it could, and not try our nerves with "explosions." But since the bittern never can know, and can not change that peculiar little membrane at the end of its windpipe which enables it to boom, let me suggest that humanity, clearly understanding the case, change its points of view and cease to shudder at the love-song of a harmless and beautiful bird.

To Sir Walter Scott these notes seemed drumlike, for it was he who coupled the bittern with the lark when he wrote:

"Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow."

THE SWALLOW

"As the swallow in her flying,
So the curse that is causeless lighteth not."

—Solomon.

SWALLOW STRATTON-PORTER

"Yea, the swallow hath found a nest for herself."

Chapter XIII

THE SWALLOW

The Hebrew word "dedor" means the bird of freedom; and because no other feathered creature with which Bible lands were acquainted had the swift, untiring flight, covered the wide range of territory, found its food on wing, and speedily died in captivity, as did the swallow, every one agrees that it was intended. In every land in all times this bird has been noted for the grace of its ceaseless flight, which attains such speed that a certain branch of the family find a name thereby, and are called "swifts."

Pliny said: "Of all birds the swallow alone flieth bias, and windeth in and out in his flight: he is most swift of wing and flieth with ease: and therefore not so ready to be surprised and taken by other birds. He never feedeth but flying, and so doth no other bird besides."

To the great average of folk in our day, swallow means two birds; the trim little chimney swift, and the graceful and beautiful barn swallow. These are the two that we see perching and on wing around our homes. All other members of the family that nest among cliffs and under bridges we see only on wing, where they all appear so much alike as to be indistinguishable.

I have not a doubt but this was the case in Bible lands. The swift and the swallow may have been distinguished because they were a little different in anatomy and voice;

but the remainder of the species, and very likely other small grayish and brownish birds that took food on wing, such as fly-catchers, were called swallows also. Ordinary observers separate these birds with difficulty, especially on wing; scientists make distinct species of them because of differing anatomical structure.

Swallows were very numerous in Palestine, and while a few went farther south for winter, many remained throughout the season. The swift was migratory, so it was to them, and not to the swallow, that Jeremiah referred when he said, "The swallow and the crane observe the time of their coming."

The Arab term "sus" means a rushing sound, and it is thought to apply to the wonderful flight of the swift, which is estimated to attain over eighty miles an hour. Swallows are not so speedy, but are supposed to make a migration of eight hundred miles in a night.

The swift was the first bird sign of spring in Palestine, and it is among the first with us. It is not easy to separate the species from what is said of them in the Bible, but possibly the greatest difference lay in the fact that there were no chimneys in those lands, so the swifts built in crevices, in walls of stone, and in wild, unprotected places. The swallows were the friendliest of birds. They plastered their mud houses under the eaves against the rafters of cedar and fir; inside buildings to which they could gain access through windows; in outbuildings, and they almost took possession of the great temple at Jerusalem, and all other open places of worship, mosques, and public buildings.

With us the birds of which we think when we read of a swallow or a swift have made a slight change in char-

SWALLOW FEEDING YOUNG STRATTON-PORTER

"Where she may lay her young."

acteristics and habits from these ancestors of theirs. The swallows can not find suitable nest locations under the eaves of modern houses, so they have gone to the barns, seeking the rafters and eaves, to which they still cling. So tenaciously they nest in these outbuildings that the name "barn swallow" is used to designate a species. Our swifts still chatter, but they are not so wild as the ancestors of the family. Lacking the rocky crevices of the Holy Land in which to build, in this new country of ours they find a substitute in the chimneys of brick and stone. As soon as the fires are out in the spring, they take possession, build their nests, raise their young, and chatter above us all day.

In our colder and variable climate we can not leave houses of worship and public buildings open, as did the Orientals. But every latticed belfry or any public tower where they can find a small entrance soon becomes the home of a flock of swifts. All deserted cabins and abandoned country houses have large families of them in the chimneys.

In singing of the house of God, David felt that his work would not be complete without putting in these birds, and other friendly little creatures that homed there:

> "Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house,
> And the swallow a nest for herself, where she
> may lay her young,
> Even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and
> my God."

Because so many of the swallows nested in the temples, the whole species were held almost sacred, for any bird which built in a place of worship was supposed to be claiming the protection of the Almighty. No one

would have dared interfere with a nest so placed. So inflexible was the rule to protect birds building in temples that the laws governing them there held good elsewhere, to the extent that they were welcomed near homes and regarded as a blessing.

So all over those fortlike structures with clay and stone walls, and roofs supported with heavy timbers, that were the homes of the Holy Land, the swallows flocked. They sailed over the heads of the children at play, and above the men and women at work in their gardens among the herbs and vegetables. These birds of long ago darted back and forth familiarly as they do now, even more so, because they were protected, where some people of to-day might consider them a nuisance.

They were a part of the home life of villages and walled towns. They built their nests of clay, interlaid with hair and straw, lined with feathers, and laid their little white eggs. They brooded inside buildings where people ate, slept, and worked at looms weaving linen cloth and making garments. They peered over the edges of nests under the roofs, and watched the laborers in the gardens, growing their mandrakes, cucumbers, onions, and lentils.

When their young hatched came busy times. Then those good folk saw how wise they were to protect the swallows, for in those tropical countries, flies, mosquitoes, and other tiny insects of air were great pests. The people must have seen that myriads of these were being sifted from the air by these birds and fed to their nestlings. No doubt this made the swallows doubly welcome.

I like to think that in those days the brightly clad men and women, who were so near to nature and to God,

YOUNG SWALLOWS

STRATTON-PORTER

Young "Birds of Freedom."

took the time to observe and to love the birds as they studied the stars and phenomena of nature. I can not imagine the people who lived in Shechem, Gilgal, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem rushing through life as we live it to-day. I like to picture them gleaning their fields, working their gardens, and watching their flocks, living a full life, but not a hurried one. I dream of those linen-clad women in gay colors of blue, yellow, and purple attending the welfare of their families, even as Abigail: but with time to teach their children the commandments and laws; time to linger in the spicy, odorous air; time to stand before their caged doves and coo back at them as they treated them to handfuls of wheat. These were the men and women who inside the walls of Jerusalem turned at morning and evening toward the temple and those outside faced the Holy City, and, dropping upon their knees, lifted their voices on the fragrant air and praised the Almighty. The swallows darting back and forth to their young must have been a part of the picture that these Christians in the fields, gardens, and on the housetops saw as they prayed.

In this home life it is very probable that the sweet, low note of the parent swallows, uttered so lovingly to their young, was an accustomed and welcome sound. For the swallows do not talk enough to become tiresome, and what they say has sufficient melody to be attractive.

The swifts were not so intimate in the pictures of home life. They scattered more widely during the day, and at night or feeding-time rushed across fields and gardens, through streets and by-ways, and their voices were wilder, harsher, and not at all attractive. They cried almost constantly, too, as if in mourning; and I believe

it was them, and not the swallows, Hezekiah had in mind when he sang his Trouble Song, in which are the lines:

> "Like a swallow or crane so did I chatter,
> I did mourn as a dove."

Because they liked to build in temples and places of worship, the swallow gained the protection of all people. Much as they were loved and appreciated in Bible lands, they were shown even greater honor by the superstitious people of Greece and Rome. At Athens, when the coming of the swallows announced spring, the youths who sang in temples marched in procession through the streets, chanting a welcome to the returning birds.

Pliny had wonderful things to relate of them. First, as to their migration, he wrote: "The swallows are gone from us all the winter time. Howbeit they depart not far off, but seek only the sunshine nooks near at hand, and follow the warmth. Where many times they are found naked without feathers altogether, as if they had moulted. It is said that they will never build their nest in any house in Thebes: because that city hath been many times forced and taken by the enemy."

He relates that Cecina of Volaterrae, who was master of the coach horses at Rome and used to run races, was accustomed to take a swallow from the nest of the house of each of his best friends and carry the birds to Rome. There he would paint them with his colors, and release them when he was winning at the races, so that they would fly home and announce his successes long before the swiftest postmen or carriers.

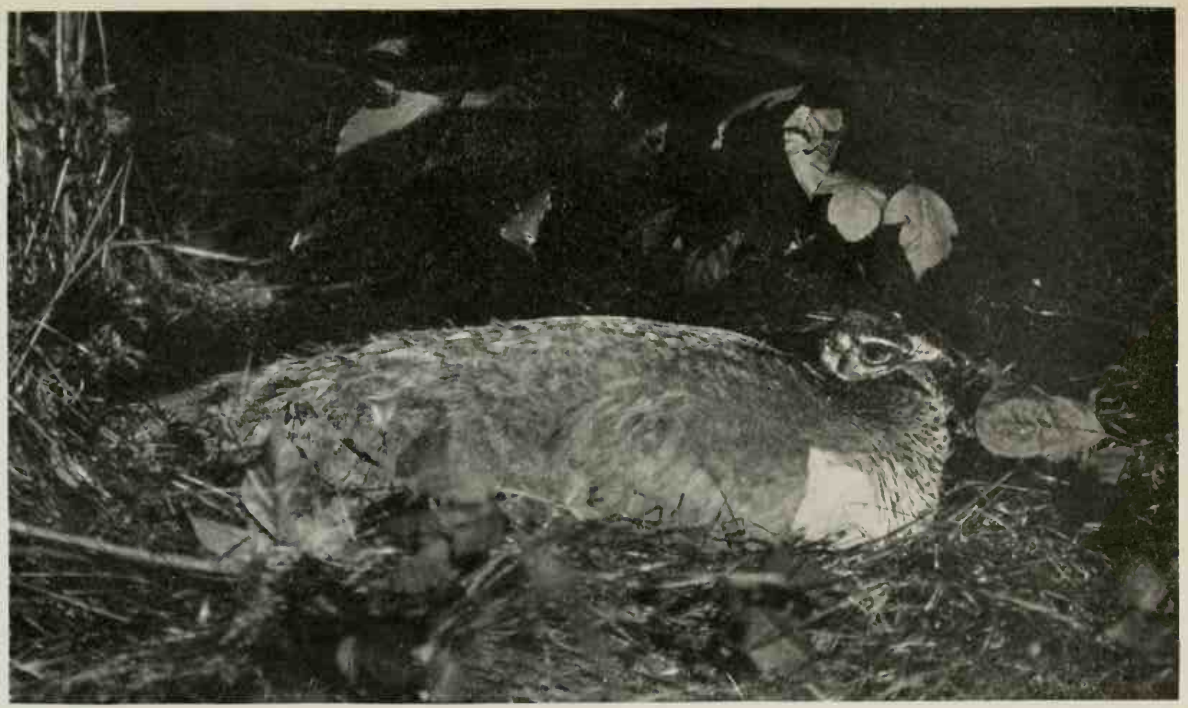
A story too quaint to omit must be given in his words: "Also Fabius Pictor reporteth in his annals, that when a

fort which the Roman garrison held was besieged by the Ligustines, there were a she swallow newly taken out of the nest within the fort, from her little ones as she sat over them, and brought to him with this watchword, that by a linen thread tied to her foot instead of a letter, he should advertise them within the fort, by so many knots tied within the said thread, as there would days pass before aid could come from him unto them, to the end that they also might be ready upon that day to sally forth."

This bird of free wing and unbroken spirit has circled the globe in its endless sailing. It is sweet of voice, beautiful of form and motion, everywhere a blessing. No wonder that in all time it has been thought to be under the protection of the Almighty.

THE PEACOCK

"*Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks.*"—1 KINGS.



BROODING PEAHEN STRATTON-PORTER

"Gavest Thou the goodly wings unto peacocks?"

Chapter XIV

THE PEACOCK

The native home of the two known peafowl is Japan for the plainer species; and Siam, Ceylon, and India for the commonest and most beautiful. In these tropical jungles nature seems to riot and revel in bright shades, and not upon flower faces does she lavish more brilliant colors than upon her birds. Of the many gayly feathered creatures none exceed the peacock in length of showy plumage or surpass its gaudy color. So wonderful are the shades changing from blue to green, lavender, purple, bronze, gold, and rich tans and grays to almost black, that a cry of admiration greets every appearance of the bird, whether among naked savages or civilized travelers.

The most ardent admirer of the peacock, however, is the bird himself. He simply becomes intoxicated with his splendid color, and spreads his great train of bright plumes, waves, lifts, and turns it to the glancing colors of the sun. When the tail is picked for market, the bird is so overcome with shame that he hides for days and will not appear in his accustomed places until driven by hunger. At times he mourns his loss until he really dies from starvation.

Peafowl are of the tree tops and the earth. They build, lay their eggs, and brood on the ground: but when nesting cares are over, the highest branch of the forest is theirs. Among the tallest trees of Ceylon and Siam,

covered by gay lichens and brightly blooming vines and air plants, these birds breed and increase until they form flocks of thousands. When they spread their gay feathers and make display of their graces the very flowers of the jungle are outshone. Fifty years ago travelers in these regions reported peafowl too numerous to estimate, and the most gorgeous sight earth had to produce. It is small wonder that they have been carried as great treasures to every end of the earth in which they possibly can live.

The bill with its arched tip is of moderate size, the cheeks are almost bare, the eyes not large but very bright, the crest of twenty-four feathers with naked shafts is nearly two inches long, and has a broad tip of blue glancing to green. The neck is not long, but proudly arched, the breast full and of bright blue-green, blue predominant. The wings are short and ineffectual, surprising when spread, and the quills separated into classes. There are almost black feathers, dark gray and light gray, beautiful reddish-tan quills, secondaries and tertiaries of dark-gray banded with tan, and a wonderful complication of these shades.

The tail consists of eighteen short, stiff gray-brown feathers. Then comes the lining of the gaudy train, that is the glory of the bird. The train feathers are placed in layers, the smallest having tiny eyes and being only six inches in length; the largest has an eye an inch and a half to two inches across. These quills have thick shafts of changing purple and green shades, and the eyes are a deep peculiar blue, surrounded at the lower part by two half-moon shaped crescents of green. Whether the tail is folded or lifted, from smallest to largest *each eye shows* encircled with a marvel of green, gold, purple, and bronze.

The rows of quills of this train occupy so much space that the smallest feathers reach so far up on the back that they fall between the wings; and when the tail is spread it appears to open as a fan just behind the head with its sparkling crest. Added to the glory of the tail is the fact that the bird by muscular contraction at the base of the quills can rattle them together and play a sort of peculiar music.

The peafowl greets the dawn with cries impossible to translate into English, though it is thought that its Grecian name, and also the Latin name, Pavo, is in imitation of its morning call. It is as great a weather prophet as a cuckoo, and cries from high places before rain. Its voice takes on a more gentle tone when paired birds communicate with each other or care for their young. When domesticated, it will become friendly enough to eat from the hand, but never will voluntarily enter confinement, preferring to perch in tree tops and upon high buildings on the coldest nights.

The peahen is smaller than the cock; her neck is green, and her wings exquisite shades of gray, tan, and brown. But she has no train until old age, and then in some instances it is recorded that she has been observed to grow one. I know of no case of this kind in my experience, and I doubt it. She nests upon the ground, and while prolific in her native home, she is an indifferent breeder when imported, and her young are very delicate. The nights are too cold, and the days too hot; so between these changes and with the cold rains of spring and summer hailstorms few survive.

The Japanese peafowl is similar in shape to all appearances and only a little less gaudy in plumage. There

have been bred, through some freak of nature, pure white peafowl, and those with the blue breast and white train. These birds are much used in parks and cemeteries, but, while novel, they have in no degree the beauty of the natural bird. They are very hardy; once acclimated, old birds live long, and make wonderfully decorative effects around country places. They are so frequent now that many farmers have them on their premises. They eat the common food given chickens, and are fond of tender green buds picked from trees and bushes.

They, too, are among the birds of oldest history. They were twice mentioned in the Bird Play of Aristophanes, whose soul, Plato said, "was a temple for the graces." In his play of the birds his only use of the peacock was to inquire of a bird with any vanity if it was a peacock. It was among the birds included in the toast to the health and safety of the "Cloud-cuckoo-town," residents along with the horned owl, pelican, goldfinch, pigeon, spoonbill, bullfinch, heathcock, teal, bittern, heron, stormy petrel, blackcap, and titmouse; surely a motley array of music and discord, day and night, land and sea feathered folk. The chief benefit we derive from his use of it is to establish it as a bird generally known in his time. In this same play he mentioned or made principal characters of the jackdaw, lapwing, partridge, attigan, duck, kingfisher, owl, jay, turtle-dove, crested lark, horned owl, buzzard, pigeon, heron, falcon, cuckoo, red-foot, red-cap, purple-cap, kestrel, diver, ousel, osprey, wood-pecker, kite, sparrow, rook, thrush, eagle, nightingale, swan, ostrich, pelican, vulture, night hawk, goose, and swallow. The use he made of these proves them to be identical with, or very similar to our species of the same name. As he was con-

temporaneous with Zechariah and Malachi, 444 B. C., his writings seem to bring all records of that time closer home and stamp them with verity.

The methods of taking birds that Aristophanes mentioned were snares, traps, limed twigs, springs, meshes, nets, and trap-cages: the same as those of which Bible writers tell us.

Alexander, who lived 104 to 78 B. C., claimed to have brought peacocks into Greece from invasions of the East, but Aristophanes already had indicated that they were common enough to bear introduction into a public play, and their presence and attributes were commonly understood. So the claim of Alexander is invalidated by this Bird Play, and by the works of other writers as well.

Alexander himself was one of the emperors who, following the custom of his predecessors, indulged in those banquets of which we read, where first rare birds were imported and served as roasts, then, to outdo predecessors, only the brains or tongues were used for royalty. The peacock at proper age and in good condition is fine food; and so are its eggs. They were roasted for the feasts of ancient Greeks and Romans, and it was often the custom to skin and cook the bird, re-cover it, and serve, showing the gaudy feathers.

Pliny recorded that "the first that killed peacocks to be served up as a dish at the table was Hortensius, the great orator, in that solemn feast which he made when he was consecrated high priest." He stated in his great work on natural history that it was Aufidius Lurco who first fattened peacocks for food and sold them in the market places for so much that his yearly income from this invention was sixty thousand sesterces. This was at

the time of the last Pirates' war. He also gave instructions for breeding, and the care of eggs and young, which proved the peafowl to have been more common and more in use for food than domestic fowl, the consumption of which at that time was regulated by law.

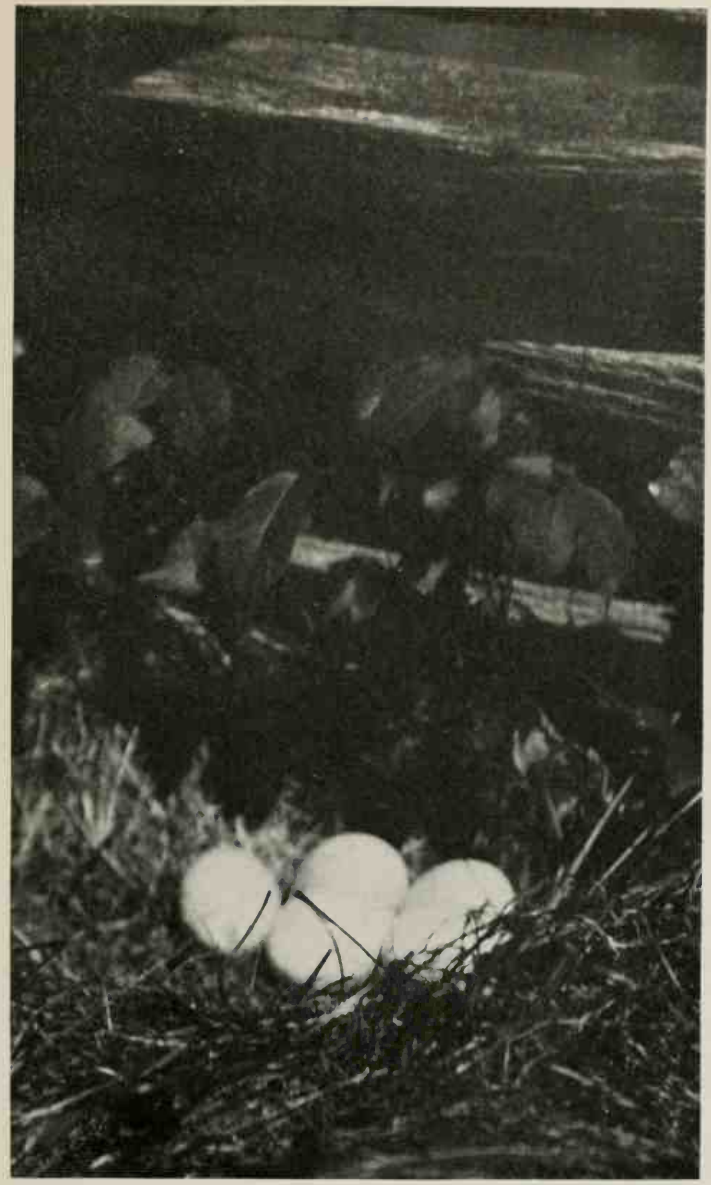
The first appearance of the peafowl in the Bible occurs as the finale of the summing up of the wealth and magnificence of the court of Solomon, in the tenth chapter of First Kings:

"For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks."

This same statement is repeated in almost precisely these words in Chronicles. It is questioned by some Bible commentators who believe the parrot to be the bird intended. At this time peafowls were old enough and sufficiently scattered to have reached the court of Solomon, who had all the novel and elegant accessories the discovered world produced. His ships reached coasts where peafowl were on the market, and no one can make me believe his agents neglected to carry them to the court of the greatest king of earth.

Apes and parrots were companions of the peacocks in the tree tops of Ceylon and along the coast of Malabar, and I have not the slightest doubt that the ships of Solomon brought all of them to his court.

I am quite sure so great an artist as Rubens never would have painted the beautiful picture of "The Virgin with the Parrot," found in the Rubens room of the Royal Art Museum of Antwerp, without first satisfying himself that there was a possibility that the Virgin



PEAHEN NEST STRATTON-PORTER

Peahens lay their eggs upon the earth.

at least had seen a parrot, no matter how much the subject was idealized. The technique of the painting is fine enough, and the composition and coloring; but personally, I do not at all care for studies of the Virgin in rich robes, posing upon elaborate couches, surrounded by fortunes in rich tapestries and imported birds of great price. It grates upon my sense of the fitness of things. A Virgin with calm, pure eyes, homespun robes, and sandaled feet, following a rough path leading to the village of Nazareth, and pointing out to a little Man-child the wonders of the skies above them and the miracles of nature all around them, would be far more to my taste.

I doubt very seriously if Nazareth boasted any imported birds even in the days of Mary, a thousand years after the time of Solomon. But in her journeys to feasts at Jerusalem and across country she no doubt had seen the bird, and so it could be introduced into a picture of her time with propriety. I can see no way to settle the question as to whether Solomon imported peafowl or parrots, so I choose to believe it was both.

In the old version of that interview with the Almighty in which Job learned much natural history, the Creator Himself mentioned the peafowl. In impressing Job with the most wonderful of creations, the Almighty asked of him:

"Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?"

All commentators seem to agree that this is a mistake, and the translation should read "ostriches." Of course, the peafowl came much nearer having goodly wings than the ostrich; but its wings were nothing of which to boast.

Job did not give wings of any sort to any bird, and neither did the Creator Himself give "goodly" wings

unto either peafowl or ostrich. He gave to the peafowl a very short, insufficient wing for the weight of its body and the length and burden of its train, so that it only can take short upward flights by easy stages. All flight is so much of an effort and makes the gay colors so conspicuous that when pursued the bird more frequently trusts to its legs. It points the head low, weaves among grasses the color of its back, and hides as soon as possible. This is its best protection, and the bird knows it; but it often loses its life by being clubbed when believing itself hidden. However, it no doubt saves life by hiding much more frequently than it possibly could by taking wing in the open.

This is one of the marvels of nature to which the Creator called the attention of Job in this chapter. No one gave "goodly wings" as we would consider them to the peafowl, and so it is given instead a back so like the rich blue-greens of tropical waters under strong blue skies, surrounded by gold-green and blue-green grasses, bronze shades of dried leaves, and the gray of old logs and limbs, that it hides perfectly and does not need the wings of an eagle. If the peafowl undertook to soar in the sky, its train would make such a target that the most inexpert marksman could not fail to bring it down.

It does not seem to me at all impossible that the peacock really is intended in this summing up of wonders which also includes the curled feathers of the ostrich with the gait of a horse, the wonderful flight of the eagle, the time when wild animals bear their young, or the impossibility of domesticating the unicorn.

There is no question but the translation in Kings and Chronicles is correct, for peafowls were abundant in lands

visited by the ships of Solomon, and when one takes into consideration the state of his court in Jerusalem at the time of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, it is not difficult to believe that he had every luxury the known world provided.

It is related that the queen came to Jerusalem on a visit, and she undoubtedly thought well of the pomp and circumstance in which she traveled. She had heard that the court of Solomon at Jerusalem was marvelous for the luxury and wealth of its king, and he famous for his wisdom and learning. So she entered Jerusalem with all the display she could command, "a very great train," and laid at the feet of Solomon gifts of spices in such abundance and richness as never before had been seen at one time. On that point she outdid Solomon, and nowhere else in the world were spices so used as in Bible lands. The cookery was rich with them, clothing packed in them, bath water perfumed with them, and before the dead were placed in sepulchers every layer of masses of wrappings was filled with quantities of rare spices, so they were in great demand and very precious.

The twelfth book of Pliny's natural history is devoted to spice trees and those that yield incense. Arabia was the only country producing the precious frankincense, and so he called it "Happy Arabia." Yet he added: "Unworthy country as it is for that surname, in that it taketh itself beholden to the gods above, therefore, whereas indeed they have greater cause to thank the infernal spirits beneath. For what hath made Arabia blessed, rich and happy, but the superfluous expense that men be at in funerals: employing those sweet odors to burn the bodies of the dead which they knew by good right were due

unto the gods." He recorded that only certain families and their descendants were allowed to gather frankincense, and these men were compelled to follow strict observances on the day on which they approached the precious trees. They must not have looked upon the dead, and must have been freshly purified in body.

He described the gathering of frankincense as follows: "The first, and indeed the kindly season falls about the hottest days of summer, at what time as the dog days begin: for then they cut the tree where they see the bark to be fullest of liquor, and whereas they perceive it to be thinnest, and strut out most. They make a gash or slit only to give more liberty; but nothing do they pare, or cut clean away. The wound or incision is no sooner made, but out there gushes a fat foam or froth: this soon congeals, and grows to be hard: and where the place will give them leave, they receive it in a quilt or mat made of date tree twigs, plaited and wound one within another, wicker-wise. For elsewhere the floor all about is paved smooth, and rammed down hard. The former is the better way to gather the purer and cleaner frankincense: but that which falleth upon the bare ground proves the weightier. That which remains behind, and sticks to the tree is patted and scraped off with knives, or such like iron tools; and therefore no marvel if it be full of shavings of the bark. The whole wood or forest is divided into certain portions; and every man knows his own part: nay, there is not one of them will offer wrong unto another, and encroach upon his labors. They need not set any keepers to look unto those trees that be cut, for no man will rob his fellow if he might, so just and true they be in Arabia. But believe me, at Alexandria, where frank-

PEAHEN AND NEST STRATTON-PORTER

Peahen waiting for her nest to be pictured.

incense is tried, refined, and made for sale, men can not look surely enough to their shops and workhouses, but they will be robbed. The workman that is employed about it is all naked, save that he hath a pair of trousers or breeches to cover his shame, and those are sewed up and sealed too, for fear of thrusting into them. Hoodwinked he is sure enough for seeing the way to and fro, and hath a thick coife or mask about his head, for doubt that he should bestow any in mouth or ears. And when these workmen be set forth again, they be stripped stark naked as ere they were born, and sent away. Whereby we may see that the rigour of justice can not strike so great fear into our thieves here, and make us so secure to keep our own, as among the Sabaeans, the bare reverence of religion of those woods."

To me the most interesting fact here stated is contained in this last sentence, which contrasts the honor of true believers with pagans. The queen had one small triumph when she presented Solomon with costly spices to exceed all his great store. She also brought magnificent gifts of gold and of jewels. But she very soon learned that all the marvelous reports she had heard, probably for the first time in her experience, fell so far short of what she saw that, as she expressed it, "The half was not told me!" You will admit that this is a rare case, and speaks well for the honesty of the times. In these days, when we go to view any spectacle, we are surprised if we see one-half that we have been told we will.

First Solomon answered all those difficult questions which the queen wanted some one else to reason out for her. Queens grow accustomed to being waited upon, and really it is the most tiresome work in the world to think. It is

much easier for a queen to summon a train, make a State journey, and ask questions and accept the answers, than it is to stir up the gray matter at the base of the skull and work out vexatious problems for herself. As to how satisfactory the result is when one accepts the brainwork of another, that all depends. The queen was contented with the wisdom of Solomon, and we who have read his history, his maxims, and his wonderful songs are not surprised. Granting all that may be lost in editing and translation from another language, enough remains of the work of Solomon to prove him as wise as any man who ever has lived, both in thought and business transactions, and his maxims and poems never have been surpassed and probably never will be.

After all the questions were answered, Solomon politely and unostentatiously—for he was a gentleman—showed the queen how he operated a court, managed retainers, commanded an army, amassed wealth, and provided pleasure. She saw his stores of linen yarn for fine cloth, tapestry, and embroideries. She gazed upon uncounted precious stones, and much gold from Ophir, which is a small island lying to the southeast of India. Solomon had so much almug, or red sandal-wood, that it was used for the pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the frames of harps, and musical instruments for the singers of the temple, and the palace of Solomon. He showed the queen that he received six hundred three score and six talents of gold each year, and spices from the merchants of all the kings of Arabia.

He took her to that house in Lebanon built of fine cedars and filled with two hundred targets of beaten gold, containing six hundred sheckels each, and three hundred shields of gold, of three pounds' weight to the shield, and

all the vessels of it pure gold. He showed her a throne of ivory overlaid with the purest gold, and surrounded by fourteen carved lions, and the like of it was nowhere else on the earth.

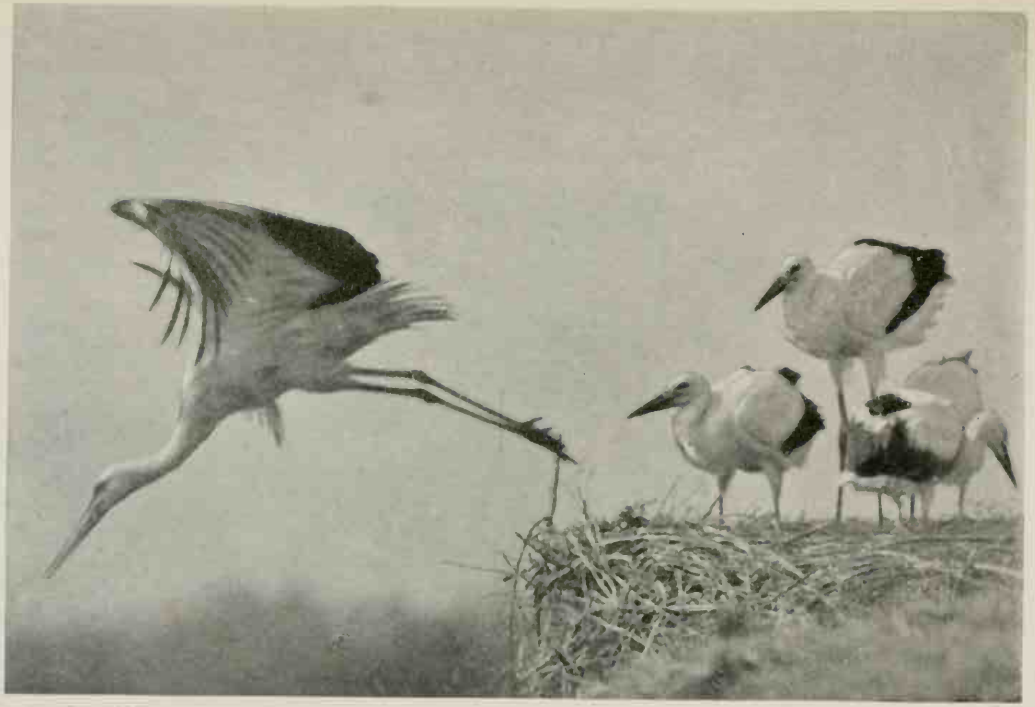
She examined presents sent him by all the rulers of the known world; vessels of silver, gold, jewels, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules. He showed her one thousand four hundred chariots, twelve thousand horsemen, how he made silver common as stones, and rare cedars of Lebanon common as sycamores in Jerusalem. He paraded before her hundreds of slaves, retainers, and secretaries, all robed in linen and fine cloth, and wearing bracelets and ornaments of gold, silver, and precious stones. He took her to such service, in such a temple as she did not know existed. He opened for her inspection the produce of those ships of his which came once in three years from Tharshish, bringing "gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

"And when the queen had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, 'It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.'"

So she presented her great gift of spices, one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and precious stones; and the king returned her courtesy by allowing her to select from his possessions anything that pleased her fancy. I am very sure that she took some peacocks among her selections, for most women love to own a peacock if they can, and be like one if they have an opportunity.

THE STORK

"*Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times.*"—JEREMIAH.



A STORK FAMILY

ANSCHUTZ

The Hebrew "hasidah," meaning kindness, is translated stork.

Chapter XV

THE STORK

The stork first appeared in the Bible among the birds of abomination, and it is remarkable that the crane did not also; for the birds are relatives, and of such similar habit that one would think Moses would have classed them together. Yet the distinction he made was observed down to the Christian era, for Pliny quoted Cornelius Nepos, who died in the days of Augustus Cæsar, as saying "that in his time storks were holden for a better dish at the board than cranes." Pliny added, "And yet see, how in our age now, no man will touch a stork if it be set before him on the board, but every one is ready to reach into the crane, and no dish is more in request."

He also wrote, "Storks are so highly regarded for the slaying of serpents in Thessaly, it is regarded as a capital crime to kill a stork, and by law he is punished as in case of manslaughter." This stringent law may account for the hesitancy of Italians of early days about tasting stork meat. Death penalties are not things with which men trifle. If the bird ate snakes in the land of Moses, we need no other explanation as to why it was placed among the abominations.

This feeling concerning these birds seems to exist to-

day, for although of the same family, I do not know of stork being eaten anywhere, while cranes are a regular article of commerce in our country. Their meat is considered very good by the people of our Western Coast.

The Hebrew "hasidah," meaning kindness, is translated stork. So undoubtedly these birds were named in remote ages by men who first began to study and note their habits. The great care the old birds exercise over their young, and their tenderness to each other, may have originated the idea that formerly prevailed that these birds remained in families and recognized the ties of birth all their lives. For this reason it was stated constantly by early writers that in old age the storks were cared for by their young, being fed when blinded, lame, or unable to fly.

The storks of the Bible were migratory birds. They came up in clouds from interior Africa, crossed the Red Sea, and part of them settled in Palestine, the others kept on across the Mediterranean or skirting the east coast, entered and spread over Europe to the north as far as England and Holland. They had the peculiar habit of traveling in the daytime, and their flight was strong and high. The last of March, when spring had arrived in Palestine, some bright day Merom, Galilee, the Jordan, and Jabbok suddenly were peopled with hungry storks searching for lizards, frogs, snakes, and any small animal, large insect, or water resident. Great flocks of these birds settled over ruins near marshes and water, by lakes and rivers in cultivated places, and in forests near the water; while cloud after cloud passed on farther north.

In pointing out the carelessness of the people, Jeremiah called attention to the wisdom of the birds in watch-

STORK ANSCHUTZ

"The wind was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork."

ing the seasons and following them. He said, "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times," which proved that he had been observing the birds; and then he added, "but my people know not the ordinances of the Lord."

The splendid picture these birds made in flight so impressed Zechariah, the man who was given to seeing visions, that in the instance of the ephah of lead and the talent he said of the two women he saw bearing away the ephah, "The wind was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork." These birds came with the showers and renewal of spring, settled in every available spot all over Palestine, and began housekeeping.

Workers in the fields saw the home life of those by the rivers; fishermen were familiar with them around lakes of fresh water, and where rivers entered the salt seas; herdsmen of the plains and waste places watched those over ruins; but I doubt if they entered cities and nested on the housetops, as they love to do elsewhere, for those people used the house tops themselves.

The birds were conspicuous, for they were large, standing nearly three feet, and having a sweep of almost seven feet. They were white, and made a wonderful spectacle on wing as they soared against the blue, purple, and red skies of the Orient, or stood a snowy picture fishing among the rushes of lake margin or river. There was also a black stork, having black on the beak and neck. It was a smaller bird and wilder, keeping more to desert and wilderness places.

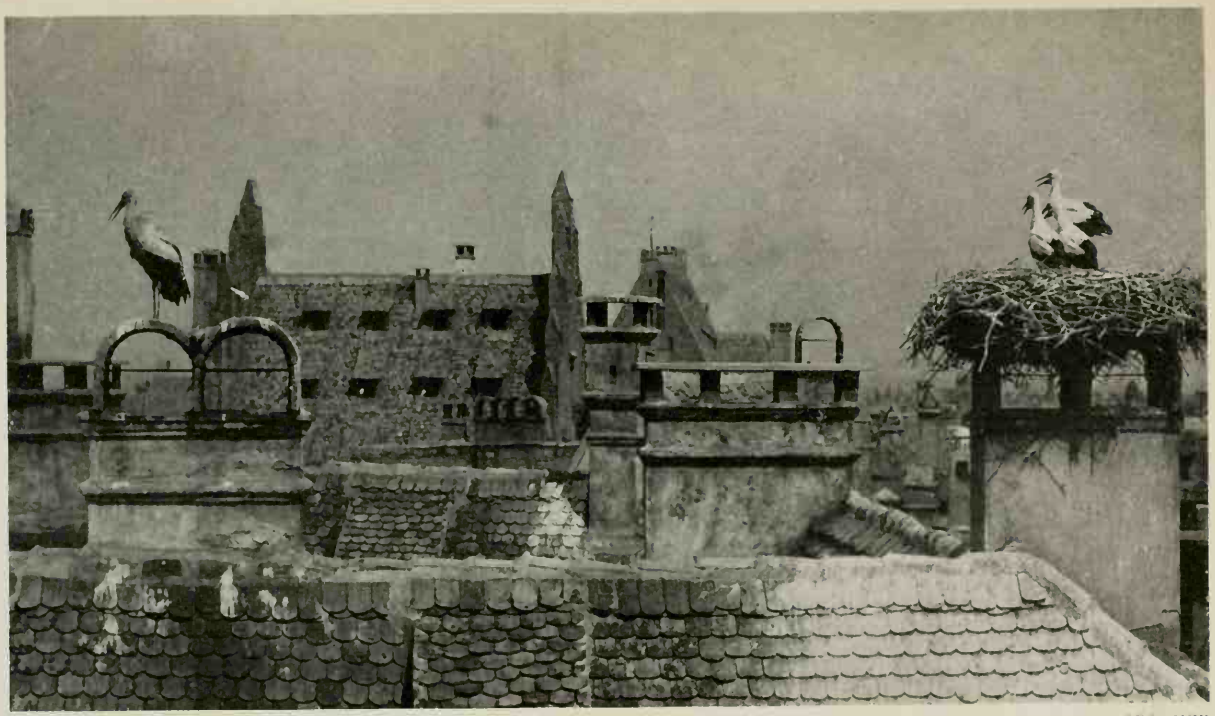
Soon after arrival they paired and began house-building in the case of young couples mating for the first time, or old birds that found their former nests destroyed.

For these birds build one nest, and return to it for generations unless there is an accident. David had watched their nesting and described it in a poem:

> "The trees of the Lord are satisfied;
> The cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted:
> Where the birds make their nests;
> As for the stork, the fir trees are her house."

What a wonderful place Lebanon must have been! No wonder her trees were "satisfied," and that the birds flocked there to nest! It is a happy tree whose branches are upholding a number of beautiful bird homes, whose leaves shelter tender, open-mouthed young, and that makes choir lofts for singers raising an unceasing chorus of pure joy in living and praise of the Almighty. I know the storks nested all over Palestine, from marshes to rocky mountain crags: but David said the "fir trees are her house," and I so love David that I like to picture this bird as at home in the tree that he pointed out in particular as hers.

People to-day are inclined to think of the stork as a bird of the house top, and of Holland as its home: but it must be remembered these houses of Bible lands were very different of structure, and the time was in the days when birds were more accustomed to building in trees. So the headwaters of the Jordan, which rises in the mountains of Lebanon, far to the north of Canaan, and over the mountains down to Lake Merom; all over Mt. Hermon, and along the waters of the hill country toward Damascus, were their locations. They especially loved Lebanon. Lebanon with her skies red from the re-



STORKS

SPOONER

"It is regarded as a capital crime to kill a stork."

flected sands of Syrian deserts; Lebanon, alternately warmed by the hot breath of the sirocco and cooled by the sea breezes so near; Lebanon, with her rivers, valleys, and high mountains; with her air perfumed by the heavy fragrance of blooming spring flowers, fruit bloom, tree bloom, and her hills and valleys covered with budding camphire, acacia, and many varieties of spice bushes, and every breath heavy with the exhilaration of the resinous odor of cedar, cypress, and fir.

In Lebanon's great fir trees, with their flat branches making splendid foundations, the big white storks found their houses. Mated pairs renewed their yearly vows, and repaired their former abodes. Young ones courted strenuously, the males dancing and performing many antics, extremely queer to those watching, but captivating to their loved ones. For the storks have been noted in all lands and times for their tender and affectionate love between pairs and young. People in later days in Holland have so marked these birds before migration that there could be no doubt but the same ones returned in the spring. Unquestionably, storks mate for life.

In the big, dark fir trees of the Holy Land they built their homes, laid their eggs, and raised their young. They fished in the waters, and hunted frogs and lizards over the mountains. To their varied diet found by water edges, on mountain sides and plains, they added reptiles, offal, and garbage, which of course had something to do with placing them among the "abominations." At home they made an exquisite picture of snowy contrast against their dark-green background, or when fishing; and seen against the Oriental skies on wing they were

wonderful to behold. I think Solomon showed the beauty of the house of the white stork among the fir trees to the Queen of Sheba when he took her to the treasure chamber in the forest of Lebanon. I wish that all of us could have been there to have seen such an impressive picture.

THE RAVEN

"Consider the raven, that they sow not, neither reap: Which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them."—JESUS.

"GOD FEEDETH THEM" STRATTON-PORTER

"Who provideth for the raven his food?"

Chapter XVI

THE RAVEN

Birds were first mentioned in the Bible in the Mosaic account of creation, where the great law-giver specifically indicated their serpentine origin when He wrote, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of the heaven." The first bird specifically mentioned was the raven. Under this name Bible writers included the whole family of crows, rooks, jackdaws, and ravens, all of which are old birds in history, and abounded in great numbers in the land of Canaan.

The dove gets all the credit for finding dry land at the time of the flood, and yet it was a raven that was first sent forth to make this discovery. You read in the records of Moses, "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth."

Noah had a reason for all the things he did, and so no doubt he spent some thought upon which bird messenger he should send winging over the face of the flood to bring tidings of the going down of the waters. He knew why he first sent out a raven, and it is little trouble to fathom his reason. The bird was big and strong, nearly

two feet in length, with a fifty-two inch wing sweep, and sustained its flight well. Also, in all time it had made more use of its brain than any other bird. Ravens can do the wisest, most uncanny things. They are fearless, impudent, and penetrate where they please. They have a habit of carrying away bits of bright things which attract them. Their powers of mimicry are so great that they can imitate the human voice almost as well as a parrot, and say the thing appropriate to the time. They have great attachment to their mates, and undoubtedly pair for life.

Here are many reasons why Noah made his first experiment with the raven. It would be sure to return, and equally it would be sure to bring anything which might attract its attention. It did return, no doubt perching upon the ark, flying as it chose, and feeding from floating carrion. This continued until the waters were gone and its mate was released to join it. But because the dove, almost dazed by confinement on dry diet, ate so many olive leaves that a bit of green still clung to its beak, it carried off the honors, and in all time since has been portrayed winging its way to the ark carrying a neatly cut twig with several leaves, a thing quite incompatible with the history or habit of the bird. But if it found green food it would gorge itself almost to bursting. On its return it would enter the ark and regurgitate a part of what it had eaten to its mate; which is not so poetic, but beyond all question what happened, and the source from which Noah secured the olive leaf.

There are at least eight species of the raven in Palestine, most of them so similar to our birds of the same name that there is no particular difference. The Hebrew

name means black, as Solomon indicated when he used the bird's plumage in comparison with his conception of the hair of the Almighty, "His locks are bushy and black as the raven."

Not only were men acquainted with the wisdom and cunning of the crow family, but the Almighty knew as well, for when He wanted a feathered servant to do His will, He chose a raven. You will find the story in the eighteenth chapter of First Kings. Elijah, a good man from the city of Gilead, was willing to do something for his fellow-men, so the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, which is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."

Now the Almighty, who understands everything, knew what splendid raven territory that was. The brook Cherith rose on the Mount of Olives, and flowed down the mountain side among the bushes of scrub oak, thorn, and bramble, between the tall cedar and fir trees of the foothills, which made splendid raven nesting sites; out across the plain of Jericho it wandered, babbling, willow-bordered, rush-margined, and emptied into the Jordan River a little north of the Dead Sea.

Could the face of earth discover more attractive raven country? There was a rocky mountain with its supply of small animals for food. There were great trees furnishing high nesting-sites, if suitable places on Olivet were not used. There was the little brook, giving drink to the ravens and singing an invitation every foot of its way to the river, to the jays, chats, robins, crows, and blackbirds to nest in the branches of the bushes and trees that

grew along its banks, and to feed upon the fruits, berries, worms, and insects that attracted them.

There came the ravens—big, impudent black birds—the sun shining on the metallic-like luster of the necks of the males, and glistening on their glossy black backs as they broke open soft-shelled nuts, picked the fruit, hunted worms, and caught crabs and clams along the brook, fought with kingfishers and fish hawks for the fish they had captured, and ate the eggs and young from every nest of small birds that they could find. They even followed the brook out to the plains of Jericho, and there attacked hares, or any small bird they could capture; and at times, if the shepherds were not watchful, the new-born kids and lambs were killed. Of these the eyes were considered the delicate morsel, and always eaten first. This originated, no doubt, in the fact that they could be eaten when the birds were hungry without waiting to tear open the skin, to attack the inside parts. All of them indulged in carrion, and so were placed among the abominations for food by Moses.

If they nested in the shelter of the rocks of Olivet, they used small material and did not build large nests; but if they chose the great trees at the foot of the mountain, and nested in cedar, olive, box, or fir, they built big nests, large as a half bushel, of good-sized sticks and twigs. They averaged four eggs to the nest. Usually they fed upon whatever they found, and regurgitated it partially digested to the young. But as the nestlings grew, coarser food was carried them, and at times the ground under a nest was found littered with the bones of smaller birds, feathers, and fish scales, that had been carried to the clamoring young.

Along the brook large willows, the poplar, and plane tree furnished them building sites and splendid foraging places; while out on the plains of Jericho grew the sycamore. If it was the divine plan to have a man fed by ravens, certainly here was the most propitious of all spots to find the ravens, and for the ravens to seek food. If they could not have found any, the prophet could have lived bountifully from the fruits and berries growing all around the location.

So Elijah went and concealed himself by the brook before the Jordan. "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening and he drank from the brook."

What the ravens brought Elijah for bread was not definitely stated. It may have been something like the manna upon which the Israelites were fed later on their journey, or some kind of nut or real bread provided for the birds may have been intended by Providence. There would be no trouble at all in them bringing from such an abundant location plenty of meat such as small birds, like quail and pigeons, and young animals. So the ravens were the birds that fed Elijah in the days of his concealment on the banks of Cherith.

The next appearance of the bird in the Bible was in Proverbs. Solomon had all the wisdom attributed to him, and no doubt much more. He knew it was the habit of ravens first to eat the eyes of their prey, and he used the fact in pointing a moral he wished to be well remembered. He said:

> "The eye that mocketh his father,
> And despiseth to obey his mother,
> The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
> And the young eagles shall eat it."

In convincing Job of the wisdom and wonders of the Almighty, these words are to be found:

> "Who provideth for the raven his food,
> When his young ones cry unto God,
> And wander for lack of meat?"

Of course, the ravens found their food as do all other birds, and where they were as numerous as in Palestine there must have been places among its rocky gorges where food was scarce and difficult to secure. No doubt the young ones became hungry and clamored loudly. All young birds do; even those much less aggressive than the raven. But no one should interpret this passage to mean that the old birds neglected their young. Quite the contrary. They are loving and tender with their nestlings, and feed them until sufficiently grown to leave the nest, and for several days afterward, when the young really appear almost as large as the old.

David noticed this habit of young ravens crying vociferously for food, for he wrote:

> "Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
> Who prepareth rain for the earth,
> Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains:
> He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."

That is, He provides food with which the old ravens can feed their young. Also these lines prove that all birds and animals have their place in nature, and that it is right for them to find food according to their habits.

These Bible writers seemed to be especially impressed with the idea that God provided for the feeding of the

ravens, as if they might have been a favored bird of Divinity, as was indicated in the choice of them first to leave the ark, and to sustain Elijah.

The second appearance of the raven in the Bible was after the Exodus, when Moses was striving to arrange suitable diet which would nourish and not sicken the people. Following the eagle and the vulture, he names the raven among the birds of abomination.

This, of course, was because of its habit of eating dead bodies, as did the vultures. Had the raven confined itself to fresh food, the ban might not have been placed upon it, for it had as great a variety of diet as any bird living. It ate almost anything you could mention, and then went further and ate of things you would not wish to mention, so that it was blacklisted by Moses, and in its case the ban still holds.

That this variety of food was good for the birds was beyond all question, for many specimens fed in captivity have lived from seventy to eighty years of age; and no doubt in freedom and under natural conditions even longer than that.

They were incorporated in the religion of several other nations, showing them to have been a favored bird in all time. In the New Testament Christ said of them, "Consider the ravens: that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store chamber nor barn: and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds?"

This was a warning to the disciples not to be too careful concerning their manner of living. In fact, where natural products varied as those of Palestine, the care we exercise as to food and clothing was not necessary. Not only the birds found their food without sowing and

reaping, but men literally could live from the fruits and vegetables that grew wild in the wonderful variety of soil and climate.

Aristotle noted the clamor of young ravens for food, and it was his opinion that so soon as they left the nest the old birds drove the young out of their locality and forced them to find food in other places. I doubt this, as bird habits change slowly, and our ravens follow the young several days after leaving the nest, and feed them when the ruffled, flapping, open-mouthed youngsters appear larger than the parents.

Pliny confined his history of the raven almost entirely to its ability to learn to speak and its acts of cunning. For instance, he told a story of a raven that found a bucket by a sepulcher in time of great drought, and raised the water to a drinking level by dropping stones into the bucket.

Almost all Biblical mention of the raven was made in the shape of simile and metaphor, but these allusions served to drive home a point and make a thing well remembered, which was the reason they were used. They also grounded a feeling against the bird, just as similar things have prejudiced the unthinking against the owl and hawk. The raven is a curious bird, and at different epochs in the world has figured in much interesting history.

There is against it that it is a carrion eater, that we were early prejudiced on account of its being used to scare people; that it preys upon other birds and helpless animals; that it will carry away anything small and bright it can pick up; and that where it is shown any mercy at all it develops an impudence and boldness that is annoying.

There is in its favor splendid size and appearance; it had the qualities that made Noah select it as the first bird to send from the ark; the Almighty honored it by making it His instrument for the care of Elijah; it is tender and loving with its mate and nestlings; it is very valiant in defense of its young; and it is connected with much mythology, many religions, and is one of the oldest and most interesting birds of history.

THE PELICAN

"*I am like a pelican of the wilderness.*"—DAVID.

PELICANS

"I am like a pelican of the wilderness."

SHIRAS

Chapter XVII

THE PELICAN

Of all the birds of flight that occupied the stretch of sea coast along the western borders of Bible lands, the white and brown pelicans were the largest and most picturesque. Much of this coast was rocky declivity or stretches of sand covered with scrub trees and bushes, beaten by the winds sweeping the length of the great sea. To the west washed the Mediterranean, dotted with ships of commerce and small crafts of deep sea fishermen; to the east rose the mountains of Palestine, while foothills, valleys, and fertile plains lay between. But as the country was not over sixty miles wide in its least extent, and one hundred in its greatest, it is probable that most of the inhabitants were familiar with the sights and sounds of the sea. So they knew its gentle breath of summer singing, and were swept by its wildest gales of winter wrath. They were accustomed to the soft clouds that hung over it in calm, the mountainous black ones of storm, all the reds and yellows of the glory of the setting sun, the endless reflections from shimmering water, and the vivid color of almost tropical land.

No part of the picture was more wonderful than the great white birds that swept across the waters, fished around the shores, and perched on the trees or rocks of the coast, sleeping while their food digested.

David must have been feeling at his very worst when

he compared himself with these great, disconsolate-looking birds as they perched, for I do not think he in any way resembled them. But any soul tuned to the poetic heights of David also knows the depths of despair; and it was in old age, when trouble came, that he likened himself to the pelican. Of course, there is the usual discussion as to whether the pelican is the bird intended, some claiming that sea coast is not wilderness. That is just what great stretches of Mediterranean coast were in the days of David: miles of sand and rocks, scrubby trees, and the islands near the coast were complete wilderness.

The Hebrew "kaath" means "to vomit," and so either the pelican or its close relative, the cormorant, was intended, as both these birds disgorge immense quantities of food to their nesting mates and young. The pelican probably took its name from its habit of emptying its pouch when frightened, to lighten its weight for flight. So the term seems more appropriate to it than to the cormorant, which is not credited with this habit.

Pelicans perching were the homeliest birds imaginable. But on wing any bird that could range cloud spaces, with snowy wings sweeping eight and one-half feet in extent, above a great turbulent sea, was a most impressive picture. The pelicans were included in the awe, color splendor, and majesty of the great sea, and all the inland water that they also inhabited in Bible times. Then they dropped from their high estate, and perching, gorged, and sleepy, their big bills pressing their breasts in dejected attitude, they became birds of "abomination." Their diet and habits placed them among the creatures prohibited for food; and this unprepossessing attitude, and their coarse, rough, grunting voices, went fur-

YOUNG PELICAN SHIRAS

A young pelican waiting for dinner.

ther and classed them with the birds used to inspire terror and repulsion in people who were being warned of the devastation that followed evil living.

The white pelican had yellow tints on the top of the head and neck, and the tip of the beak was red. It stood five feet in height, and had a wide wing-sweep. The beak was very long, the upper mandible having a sharp tip curving over the lower. Under the lower mandible, and extending down the throat, was a large pouch in which the bird collected the fish for its food and to carry to its nest. The capacity of this pouch was so great that the pelican could load it with fresh fish until unable to fly with the weight, and so it took its name from its power to eject this burden when it wished to fly in fear.

The white birds were pictures of the morning and evening sky. When the sun peeped over the Lebanon ranges, topped Gilead, and day dawned in the brilliant splendor of Palestine, these big white birds aroused from sleep. Spreading their large snowy wings, they arose to great heights by beating and soaring alternately, thus airing and exercising their bodies. Then they dropped from the brilliant cloud spaces, waded along the shores of the Mediterranean, the Dead Sea, Galilee, and the Jordan, and caught a supply of fish to last until evening. Through the middle of the day they perched and digested their food.

Again at evening, when the red sun swung above the Arabian desert, crossed Egypt, and buried itself in the green waters of the great sea, the white pelicans took wing, as if to gain a high space from which to observe the purple, yellow, red, and blue of the sky as the great ball of fire sank slowly into the water. Over the wilderness

spaces of coast, over the villages of the fishermen, over the ports of commerce, half way across the brilliant spaces of Palestine, they sailed and soared: now over the Mediterranean, again above land, and only the Almighty knew what they saw. But I love to try to think myself up there with them, and imagine the sunset, and the glory of night on the sea and land in the Palestine of those days.

The brown pelicans were even larger than the white: the greatest, called the Dalmatian, standing a foot taller and having a twelve-foot sweep of wing. The brown birds had a head of dirty white, tinged with yellow on the top and on the throat, the long beak and pouch of the species, and webbed feet similar to geese. All of them were indifferent walkers, but of strong flight.

They loved to congregate along wilderness places by the sea. The male birds were strenuous lovers, and courted their mates with much attention. They helped build nests, with their big beaks breaking twigs from dead bushes and placing them crosswise until they had a deep, solid foundation. This they hollowed out and lined with dry reeds, rushes, and roots. These nests were at times five and six feet across. The birds usually laid three rough eggs, varying in tint with the species. Those of the brown birds were dirty white with a rosy flush, and of the white ones, a whiter egg with bluish tints.

The young were naked at first, then covered with white down, and they feathered before leaving the nest. The brown birds fished throughout the day, and gathered greater quantities of larger size than the white. Fish weighing two and a half pounds have been taken from the pouch of the male. They carried such numbers to a nest that the young could not consume them, and

PAIR OLD PELICANS

Homeward bound.

SHIRAS

many were dropped on the ground. The hot sun of the seashore shining on this offal between the closely placed nests soon produced conditions unbearable to mortals. Small wonder Moses thought pelicans unfit for food.

Pliny described a bird that, from the text, I think must have been a pelican. He wrote: "The onocrotali much resemble swans, and surely they might be thought the very same and no other, but that they have within their throat another kind of gizzar beside the craw, in which these fowls, being insatiable, bestow all that ever they can get; whereby it is of a wonderful great capacity and will receive very much. Now when they have done ravening and filled this poke, soon after they conveyed it thence by little and little into their mouth, and there chew the cud until after it be well prepared, they swallow it down into the very craw and belly indeed." This appeals to me as pelican history.

So these great birds were a familiar sight to all residents of Bible lands, for they were to be seen all along the coast, around the inland lakes and rivers, and winging their flight back and forth across the plains and valleys as they changed feeding grounds or flew for exercise. Because the Holy Land covered so little space, it is certain people were familiar with the hoarse, grunting cries of the pelicans, though they were not very great talkers.

We know what it means when Moses put a bird on the abomination list; and from the use all other Bible writers made of the pelican, one only can conclude that they are much more effective as a part of a wonderful landscape picture than they were as congenial neighbors near the habitations of men. If they had not been

disagreeable, and a thing to be dreaded, they would not have been effectual in a picture intended to frighten people.

When Zephaniah predicted destruction for Assyria and Nineveh, he added the pelican to the picture: "And herds shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the pelican and the porcupine shall lodge in the chapiters thereof: their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for He hath laid bare the cedar work."

That is, the cedar frame and rafters which formed the inner support of these low structures made of big bricks of clay shall stand out a skeleton above crumbling walls, and jackals, wolves, bear, and hyenas shall prowl there. Pelicans perching on the tottering woodwork shall grunt their hoarse cry, bittern shall boom in the night time, and desolation to chill the heart shall reign. This quotation is from the new version, and it substitutes "porcupine" for "bittern," which is a large mistake. The voices of the porcupine do not "sing in the windows," while bittern are among the loudest-voiced creatures of night, as I have explained elsewhere.

In drawing a like picture under similar circumstances, Isaiah made the same comparison, "The pelican and the porcupine shall possess it." This completes the Biblical reference to these birds, and their history makes their use in such connections evident.

THE PIGEON

"*And if the oblation to the Lord be a burnt offering of fowls, then shall he offer his oblation of turtle doves or young pigeons.*"—MOSES.

PAIR PIGEONS

STRATTON-PORTER

"They fall to billing and kissing their mates lovingly."

Chapter XVIII

THE PIGEON

The distinction between pigeons and doves of Bible lands was not drawn strongly by the people. Pigeons were either semi-domesticated or flocked in clouds in wild estate over ravines and wilderness thickets. Doves were wild, being kept in cages as pets only in especial instances. Also they were migratory. They came in the spring with the crane and the swallow, and went in the fall. But they were much tamer than wild pigeons, living in pairs, and coming into palm groves, the fruit trees of gardens, and building on houses even, if they could find base for a nest. The wild pigeons were much shyer, and kept farther from the haunts of man, and made longer flights in food hunting. They were warier than the doves and were not so easily taken in nets and traps. Doves remained closer to their nests and were great food hunters of earth; so they were captured easily.

I can find no record of which country first domesticated the wild pigeon, but I believe it to have been these residents of Palestine. So long before the days of Moses that there are no records, men had trained pigeons to become so friendly that they nested and spent their entire lives near habitations offering them shelter, in crevices of rocky walls, and on buildings. In primitive days one of the bases of a man's wealth was the number of pigeon cotes he owned.

These cotes were usually of clay or some form of pottery, and they resembled a large square or diamond of tile, made up of many smaller diamonds closed at the back. Each entrance was large enough to admit one pair of birds, their nest material, and young. The openings appeared like small windows, and were similar, but each pair of birds knew its home and lived in it without trespass on the rights of the remainder of the flock. Their habits and characteristics were exactly the same as they are today, for Moses found them in this domesticated state among all the neighboring peoples when he led the Hebrews into the Promised Land.

Ducks, geese, and swans always abounded on the waters of Palestine, but never in great numbers, as the climate was too nearly tropical in most locations to agree with the habits of these birds of colder waters and lands. Solomon imported peafowl, and though I can make no absolutely accurate statement, it is fair to presume that when the cock and hen were sufficiently familiar in Greece to be mentioned casually in a bird play by Aristophanes, 444 B. C., they were well known in the Bible lands at the same time. The ships of mighty kings such as David and Solomon touched every known harbor, and their wealth brought to their courts every portable luxury. So I think it reasonable to fix the date of the entrance of poultry into Palestine at about 600 B. C.

Pigeons and doves are very close relatives, coupled in every mention I can find of them when being used as sacrifices; it being stated expressly that one or the other or both were to be offered. They were so loved that they almost were held sacred. When spoken of in the laws of Moses as sacrifice, doves always were mentioned first, while

PIGEON NEST

STRATTON-PORTER

"In the clefts of the rock,
In the covert of the steep place."

pigeons seemed to be second choice. Possibly it was thought that it would be a greater sacrifice to the Almighty to enter the palm groves, olive orchards, and spicy thickets, and secure wild doves or to purchase them from a dealer in birds than to go to a pigeon cote and pick up a pair of young.

Moses decreed, "And if his oblation to the Lord be a burnt offering of fowls, then shall his oblation be of turtle doves or of young pigeons." Over and over in the history of sacrifices this was repeated. At times the text varied to specify that if doves could not be secured, pigeons might be used. When the doves had migrated, the only way to secure them would have been by purchase from dealers who had kept caged specimens for market purposes. The poor could not afford this, so they offered of their precious pets from the rude cotes near their homes or went to the deep valleys and crevices leading to caves, and took young pigeons from the nest.

The conception and history of sacrifice is a strange thing. To some people it seems repulsive that the shedding of blood should be thought pleasing to an Almighty God. From the beginning of the records of man the history of all nations proves that none ever was founded without the worship of some god or deity being the basis of their civilization. Whether they worshiped the sun, the elements, animals, or imaginary spirits, all people always believed that it was pleasing to the object of their adoration to offer, in the best way possible, of their dearest possessions. Among heathen nations this even extended to the sacrifice of human life. So when the Hebrews became convinced of the existence of an Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth,

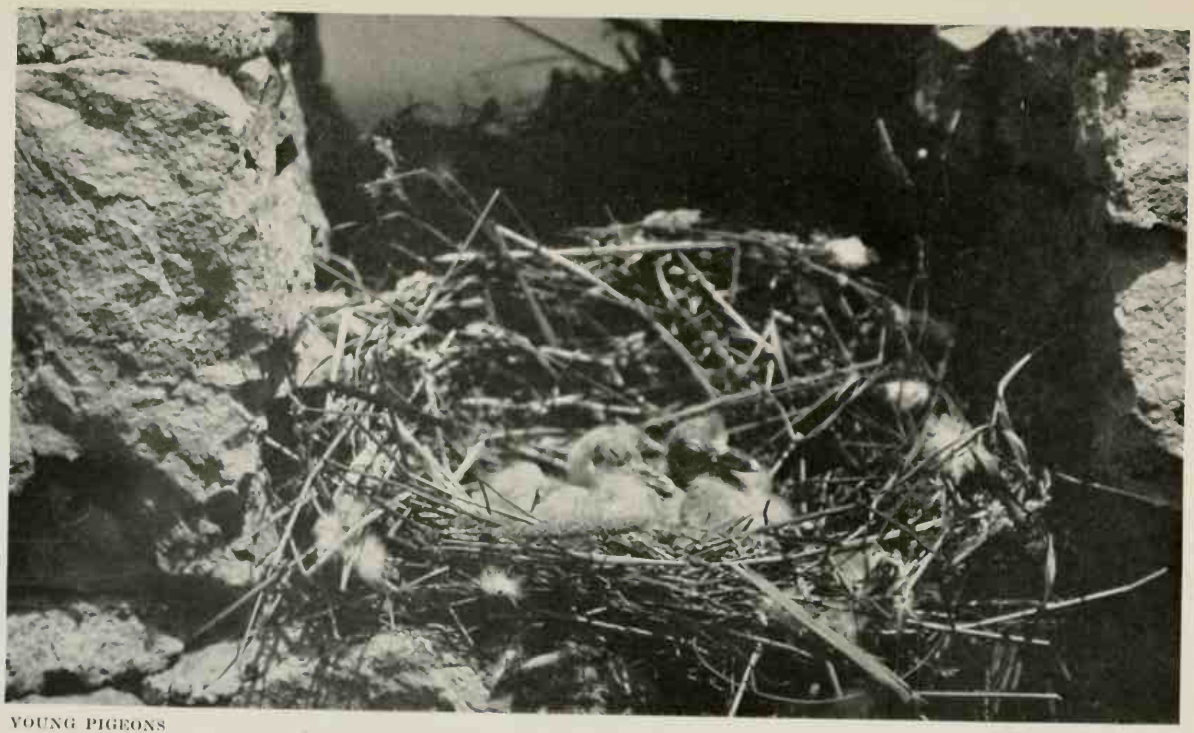
they only followed the example of all the remainder of the world when they built an altar and laid thereon of their best possessions as a voluntary gift. To-day we build costly churches and offer time and money. At that period people had little money; wealth consisted of personal possessions such as flocks and precious stones, metals, spices, and tapestry. So they gave time, and the finest of their birds and beasts.

In almost every instance the sacrifice called for young birds, in pairs, but there were occasions when a great sacrifice of heifers, goats, and lambs was made, that one bird of a kind was used, or a single bird of either. No fowl except pigeons or doves were used, so there is little doubt that the law of Moses regarding the capture of birds referred mostly to them, and was made that they might not become extinct.

Among the laws for personal conduct in the twenty-second chapter of Deuteronomy you will find this: "If a bird's nest chance to be before you in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with the young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the eggs or upon the young, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself."

This is probably the first law for the protection of birds in the history of the world. It was a very wise provision, for it left the mother to raise more young. While I believe it to have been intended mostly for the protection of doves and pigeons, the clause "on the ground" covers sparrows, larks, quail, and other low builders, which were taken for food and caged pets.

How universal and how loved were the pigeons and



YOUNG PIGEONS

STRATTON-PORTER

"Then shall he offer his oblation of turtle doves or young pigeons."

doves was proven by the fact that they were mentioned more frequently than any other bird by these observers of nature, and always as they were offered a loving sacrifice, by way of comparison, or in exquisite poetic outburst of devotion to the Almighty. Because people appreciated them above all other feathered creatures, they offered these pairs of innocent and tender young birds to the Almighty with tears and prayers of repentance, when they felt they had sinned or defiled themselves. They gave them in the hope that the sacrifice of such loved and beautiful creatures would leave men with clean hearts and pure bodies.

Moses stated that a pair of young doves and a pair of young pigeons were to be offered in purification of a leper. If anything would heal this dreadful disease, it almost seems that the sacrifice of four loving and beautiful birds that enjoy life as do doves and pigeons might avail.

So close is the relationship of the birds, and so slight the distinction between them in the law, that I doubt if the casual observer always distinguished one from the other among the wild. I believe that Solomon, David, and Isaiah, who say such exquisite things concerning them, were thinking quite as much of the pigeons that fluttered around their homes and temples, and of the wild pigeons of the wilderness, as they were of the doves of the fruit orchards, palm groves, and spice thickets.

No bird form was nearly so common as the pigeons cooing over the cotes of every home of the country, small villages, and even the royal city, Jerusalem. These birds were so fed and petted by the people that later Pliny wrote that in Rome a man could call a pigeon from

the nest on which she brooded, to his hand, as he sat inside his home.

In some instances where even the latest and most scholarly revision of the Bible says "doves," the text makes it quite plain that pigeons were the birds intended by the writer. Take the beautiful song of Redemption sung by Isaiah, in the sixtieth chapter of his book, and study this couplet:

> "Who are these that fly as a cloud,
> And as doves to their windows?"

Doves were wild birds; they had no windows. But the openings for the entrance of pigeons to their clay cotes closely resembled latticed windows. Moreover, doves lived their lives in *pairs* and flew "in clouds" only *twice a year*, at the times of migration. The pigeons of villages and cities scattered over the country searching the grain fields, plains, and thickets for seeds and other food, and returned to their cotes "in clouds" at all hours of the day, all the year long. This makes me positive that the last line should read, "And as pigeons to their windows?" Also I am sure that the dove that dwelt in the "clefts of the rock, in the covert of the steep place," was a rock pigeon.

Any reference to the voice of these birds would apply equally to either by one not skillful in bird notes, and I have not a doubt but the cages that Jesus removed from the temple contained almost as many pigeons as doves.

The records of no other country show that pigeons were so housed and protected as in Bible lands; and it may be from centuries of such intimacy with them that men of those nations are to-day the breeders of the finest

BROODING PIGEON STRATTON-PORTER

"If a bird's nest chance to be before you,—and the dam sitting upon the eggs,—thou shalt not take the dam."

pigeons in the whole world. There was originated the rare black carrier, the trumpeter, and the fantail.

Pliny wrote of pigeons under the heading of "house-doves." He recorded their faithful life in pairs, and all the things which other observers have to say of these birds. He was of the opinion that the male was a little more "harsh and imperious," than any historian with whose work I am familiar. Among points not commonly noted he said, "So soon as the eggs be hatched, ye shall see them at the very first spit into the mouths of the young pigeons salt and brackish earth, which they have gathered in their throat, thereby to prepare their appetite to meat and to season their stomachs against the time that they should eat." He made a note concerning their manner of drinking not often mentioned: "House-doves and turtle-doves have this property, in their drinking not to hold up their bills between whiles, and draw their necks back, but to take a large draught at once as horses and kine do." He wrote beautifully of their joyous flight, merely to work off an excess of delight in living, and of the clapping of wings with which it was accomplished. In what he had to say of pigeons there was less of superstition and tradition than any other bird. No doubt this was because they were familiar objects around his home, and he could see for himself what they did.

Because of all the reasons enumerated here and in the dove chapter these two birds were the most loved and honored above all others in the Bible.

THE CRANE

"*Like a crane so did I chatter.*"—Isaiah.

CRESTED AFRICAN CRANE ANSCHUTZ

"The crane observe the time of their coming."

Chapter XIX

THE CRANE

The crane is mentioned twice in the Bible. Once because it made an unforgettable picture in migration, and again because its voice was a distinctive feature of bird life. Isaiah said, "Like a crane, so did I chatter." If he did, he must have been quite noisy, for the cranes are voluminous talkers, and when they are in a favorable location their voices can be heard for two miles. They fly in wedge-shaped companies in migration, and cry almost constantly. We express it by "whooping" or "trumpeting," but the Arabs call it "bellowing." At any rate, it was a sound of sufficient force to be used by Isaiah in strong comparison, and helped bring the bird into the Bible.

The other characteristic of the crane that introduced it was that it was migratory. Jeremiah recorded that "the crane observe the time of their coming." The people watched for the crane. It was a sure sign of spring, the best-loved season, and this bird was, after the pelican, the largest that migrated, and next to the pelican and ostrich in size. It stood four feet in height, and was eight feet from tip to tip, so that it was a spectacle as it came winging across the Red Sea or stalked over the country.

Cranes were not nearly so numerous as the storks, but yet great flocks of them stopped in the wilderness south

of Jerusalem, around Beersheba, and a few pairs homed near water so far as Merom, where cultivated land attracted them. From there the great body of the species crossed the Mediterranean to Europe. Of this journey of the cranes Pliny wrote: "And verily, if a man consider well how far it is from hence to the Levant Sea, it is a mighty great journey that they take, and their flight exceeding long. They put not themselves in their journey, nor set forward without a council called before, and a general consent. They fly aloft because they would have a better prospect to see before them: and for this purpose a captain they choose to guide them, whom the rest follow. In the rearward behind there be certain of them set and disposed to give signal by their manner of cry, for to range orderly in ranks and to keep close together in array: and this they do by turns, each in his course. They maintain a set watch all the night long, and have their sentinels. These stand on one foot and hold a little stone within the other, which by falling from it, if they would chance to sleep, might awaken them and reprove them for their negligence. While these watch, all the rest sleep, couching their heads under their wings; and one while they rest on one foot and otherwhiles they shift to the other. The captain beareth up his head aloft into the air, and giveth signal to the rest what is to be done. These cranes, if they be made tame and gentle, are very playful and wanton birds, and they will one by one dance as it were, and run round with their long necks shaking full untowardly. This is surely known, that when they mind to take a flight over the Sea Pontus, they will fly at first directly to the narrow point at the straights of the said sea, lying between the two capes Criu-Metophon

WHITE CRANE

LANIER

"Many prudent actions appear to be performed by cranes."

and Carambis, and then presently they ballast themselves with stones in their feet, and sand in their throats, that they fly more steady and endure the wind. When they be half way over, down they fling these stones: but when they are come to the continent the sand also they disgorge out of their craw."

As this stands, it is fairly good natural history, save the stone and sand part of it, which is pure tradition, and incredible. It is instances like these, in the case of what almost might be called contemporaneous writers, that make the older historians of the Bible appear so sane and vital in what they have to say of the birds.

Aristotle said cranes fought so fiercely that men might take them alive while engaged in a battle, and also that "many prudent actions appear to be performed by cranes." But what these actions were, he did not state.

In their chosen locations they nested on the ground, or in colonies in trees. Their nests were large heaps of twigs and debris, and they laid two big eggs differing with species. The white cranes laid rough, pale-blue eggs having brown splotches on the larger end; and the brown birds a light drab with brown speckles. They were careful parents, though not so tender and loving as storks. They ate mice, rats, moles, and any small animal they could capture, as well as frogs and lizards.

THE OWLS

"*I am become as an owl of the waste place.*"—DAVID.

HORNED OWL STRATTON-PORTER

"There shall the great owl make her nest."

Chapter XX

THE OWLS

When night fell over the Holy Land, and all the country from Edom and the desert of Shur to the farthest northward range of Lebanon, and from Syria and Arabia to the great sea, lay under its spell, the reign of the owl family began. When the tropical moon silvered the sands of the desert, stretched molten paths across the seas, sailed with the current down the Jordan, and laughed at her reflected face in Merom and the Red Sea, the great horned owl crept from the homes of the dead near Carmel, from caves of robbers close to Gennesaret, from ruins around Jericho, from fallen cities in Judea, from desert thickets, from mountain and forest fastnesses, and lifted its weird voice.

Then all the little owls from Tyre to Askelon set up their wavering accompaniment to the beating surf of the Mediterranean. Their companions of ruins, hollow trees, caves, desert thickets and forests, lakes and rivers, over plain, field, and valley called to each other to awake and come out to moonlight, love-making, and good feeding.

Not to be surpassed, the screech owl from the hills near Damascus, the Lebanon valleys, down the coast from Sidon to Gaza, around Merom, near the cities of the Jordan Valley from Sechem to Jerusalem, close to Nazareth and Bethlehem, raised their wavering voices in a chant to the moon, the friend to night-hunters.

Belated caravans crossing the wilderness of Shur, coming in from the Arabian desert and across the hot sands of Syria, called to lagging camels and urged them to hasten. Shepherds watching their herds and flocks over hills, in valleys, and at watering-places near the edges of the desert shuddered and whispered an appeal to the living God for protection; for superstition was in their blood, and the cries were awesome. All the inhabitants of field and plain felt the heart leap of apprehension. In villages and walled cities tired workers turned on their beds and breathed a prayer for safety. When the wail broke in the gardens around the palaces of kings where great courts held revel, people shuddered as they danced.

For the owl is introduced in the Bible only to say that it is unfit for human food, and to prove that its voice can add a last touch to any picture of horror. This bird appeared as frequently as any other in the Bible of my childhood. Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah all put it into every picture of desolation they drew. The latest versions seem to feel that this was a mistake of translators, and that the bird intended was the ostrich. Perhaps this is right, but I doubt it in most instances. The ostrich had sufficient vocal accomplishments to entitle it to a place among any list of horrors made by sound, but the ostrich was a bird of light, of wide range, and voracious appetite. I imagine that when it had hunted all day searching for food along the edges of the desert, and returned to its nest at night, it was tired enough to sleep until morning. Moreover, it was a bird that was not found near many of the ruins mentioned, where the latest versions place it; for most of these were caused by the fortunes of war and were the remains

"LITTLE OWL" STRATTON-PORTER

"These ye shall have in abomination."

of cities built near fertile valleys, rich farming land, fruit orchards, and gardens. Ruins were among too much civilization, where there were too many people to pursue the ostrich for its valuable plumage, and where its nesting conditions did not prevail. Almost without exception the owl belonged to the locations described, was altogether a creature of the night, had the voice to fill all the requirements of the text, and vocalized constantly in courting, hunting, and singing for joy of the moonlight on Lebanon range, Galilee lake, and shining Merom water.

The first place in the new version I find the owl left in such a picture as these Bible writers painted when predicting desolation, was when Isaiah called on the nations to come and hear what he had to say concerning "utter destruction." It was that prophecy in which the streams were to be turned to pitch, the dust to brimstone, the smoke to ascend forever, and no one should even pass through the land. "But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and he shall stretch over it the line of confusion and the plummet of emptiness." Thorns were to grow in the palaces, and thistles in the fortresses, and all kinds of beasts, monsters, and dragons were to live there.

The other owl I find of all those that produced such delightful shudders in my first acquaintance with the Bible, is in that psalm of David, in which in declining life he felt so discouraged over his greatest sin: for David was one of the best men of an age when Christians really lived what they taught. In his case it was almost as much artistic temperament as real necessity for self-abasement, for undoubtedly David was the most lov-

able character of all the writers of the Old Testament. But he felt that his one lapse darkened his whole record, and he was a poet, so he voiced his depression in these lines:

"My heart is smitten like grass and withered;
For I forget to eat my bread:
By reason of the voice of my groaning,
My bones cleave to my flesh.
I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am become as an owl of the waste places.
I watch, and am become like a sparrow
That is alone upon the house top."

The reason the owl figured in these pictures of desolation and among the food that was an abomination, was because it deserved to be there in the last instance, and was slandered in the first. As an article of diet, the owl was not attractive. Its meat was dark, rank, and tough at an early age. The food of the bird was almost entirely meat; rats, mice, fowl, and small living creatures it could capture and swallow.

Mated pairs seemed affectionate near their nests, which they placed according to species and location. They brooded in caves, on dark cliffs, in hollow trees, towers, holes in walls, branches of trees in the open, burrows in embankments, and in the sand of the desert and waste places. They laid from four to six eggs, according to species, and cared for their young with great solicitude. These young were downy little white babies, the most cunning imaginable; and they feathered slowly, so that only one brood to a season was possible.

The Bible mentions the "great owl," the "little owl," and the "screech owl." They also had an owl which closely

SCREECH OWL STRATTON-PORTER

"The screech owl also shall rest there."

resembled our barn owl, but no passage seems to refer directly to it; though it is the bird that most probably would be in the timbers of ruined cities and in mosque and temple towers. The great owl was almost two feet in height and closely resembled our great horned owl.

The "little owl" might have been any one of a number of small species which could make the required noise. We still designate one family of small owls by the name "screech" because of their peculiar wavering cry. The ancients originated the idea.

It is certain that when night came, and the owls cried in forest, ruin, cave, temple, vineyards, and gardens, every one shuddered. This was altogether unfair to the bird. Owls are unusually safe in their daytime seclusion and their night-hunting. They remain in pairs for life, and live in the same location, which proves them satisfied and happy birds. When they lift up their voices and "hoot," and "to-whit-to-whoo," and waver, quaver, and screech, they are courting a mate, calling to locate one another, or performing a hallelujah anthem to the glory of the Almighty, who made them with art so perfect to their environment that they exult for abounding joy of life, as do the lark and linnet.

When the owl had been housed all day in darkness, night came, and it awoke and went out to find food for its family, why should it not perch on a sycamore and tell the Almighty what it thought of the forests of Lebanon and Judea, while the moon sailed serenely across the sky, while falling dew concentrated the heavy odors near the face of earth, when the night hawk and bat wavered near it hunting sweet-loving insects, called a-wing by night perfumes? The lark caroled over the grain fields

of Boaz, the blackbirds praised the rushes of Galilee, the thrushes extolled the spice thickets of Sharon; why should not the owl chant of moonlight, good hunting, and its happy home in Palestine?

But every nation, from the beginning of time, has abused this bird, forgetful of its beautiful plumage, its miraculous eyes, its noble appearance, and the marvels of evolution that could result in such a creature.

Always its cry is the basis of the discrimination against it. Nigidius said that owls had the power to change their voices "into nine different tunes." He must have heard nine different species of owl, and thought one was making all the music. Pliny classed them among the most unlucky of all birds, and his description of them surely is forceful. Here is what he had to record of owls and screech owls:

"These see but badly in the daytime. The screech owl always betokeneth some heavy news and is most execrable and accursed, and namely in the presages of public affairs: he keepeth ever in deserts: and loveth not only such unpeopled places, but also that are horrible and hard of access. *In summe*, he is the very monster of the night, neither crying nor singing out clear, but uttering a certain heavy groan of doleful mourning. And therefore if he be seen to fly either within cities, or otherwise about in any place, it is not good, but prognosticates some fearful misfortune. Howbeit I myself know that he hath sitten upon many houses of private men, and yet no deadly accident followed thereupon."

I am very happy that Pliny added that last line. It is good to hear some one speak a word of commendation for these birds. I am glad that no deadly misfortune

YOUNG SCREECH OWLS STRATTON-PORTER

In training for the midnight serenade.

happened those upon whose houses a stray screech owl chanced to perch. I have been in the habit of opening the windows, and calling them into the cabin in winter, and letting them perch upon my hands and head as I made studies of them. They are of the birds with which I can converse so familiarly as to receive a reply, and toll them with my voice. If any deadly misfortune has befallen me, I am not yet aware of it. The Almighty made the owls; so they have their place and province.

Attar, the Persian poet, shared all these prejudices, for in his Bird Parliament he made the owl say of itself:

> "I tell you, my Delight
> Is in the Ruin and the Dead of Night
> Where I was born, and where I love to wone
> All my life long, sitting on some cold stone
> Away from all your roystering companies,
> In some dark Corner where a Treasure lies;
> That, buried by some Miser in the Dark,
> Speaks up to me at Midnight like a Spark
> And o'er it like a Talisman I brood,
> Companion of the Serpent and the Toad."

I am very fond of the owls. I dislike to see any bird become an object of repulsion merely because its voice does not harmonize with our standard of melody. All birds can not be larks and nightingales; but it is not their fault; and who are we, that we presume to criticise the creations of the Almighty or the workings of evolution as He has planned them?

Finis